# ANIMADVERSIONS

On a late BOOK

ENTITULED THE

# REASONABLENESS

OF

# *CHRISTIANITY*

As delivered in the

# SCRIPTURES.

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# THE PREFACE.

I *Need make no Apology for the following papers. The Liberty which the Author of* The Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. *has taken in delivering his Thoughts to the World, gives every man a right to examine them, that proposes no other End than to enquire after Truth: which I have endeavoured with as sincere a design, as I hope he published them.*

*I have followed a method which His* Treatise *naturally led me into, and have chose to build my Observations upon the same Authority, on which he hath founded his Rule of Faith, that of the Scriptures; rather than upon any Systems drawn from them, which I must confess my self to be but little acquainted with. And this I cannot but agree with him to be the most rational means of silencing all Religious controversies. For if all Parties would joyn Issue in this, that nothing ought to be required to be believed, but what is injoyned by the clear and express declarations of Scripture; nor any Article rejected that is there plainly delivered, there might be some probable grounds to hope for a happy Conclusion*

*of all disputes of that nature, in a very little time. For certainly God has not made it very difficult for us to determine, what we are to believe, how inconceivable soever the manner of some things may appear to us.*

*The main design which the Author of* the Reasonableness of Christianity, *&c. seems to have had, is to lay down such a Scheme of Faith only, as he finds delivered in Scripture, and not to rest satisfied with those Collections of Articles, which are to be met with in the Common Systems, without any sufficient warrant from Scripture. And to this End he has run through the* Gospels *and* Acts *to discover upon what Terms our Blessed Saviour, who first founded, and his Apostles, who afterwards built up Christianity, admitted men into that Religion. And having declared at large all that he can find required by them to make* a man a Christian, *which he tells us was only the* Believing Jesus to be the Messiah; *he concludes that nothing ought to be made necessary to be believed now, which was not so then; nor any Articles imposed upon us, which are not injoyned in order to salvation in those parts of Scripture which he has considered: which alone, according to him, declare the Conditions, upon which men are denominated believers or Christians.*

*This way of examining our Faith by the Scripture, had been an unexceptionable Method for fixing the measure of it, if he had omitted no Articles which are there made as necessary to be believed by all Christians as what is observed in His Treatise. For that there are others required even to make a man a Christian in these parts of Sacred Writ, from whence he has extracted his Article of Faith., is what I propose to make appear in the following Observations. As also to shew that there are some distinct Articles from what are set down in the* Gospels *and* Acts, *delivered in the* Epistles, *that are absolutely necessary to be believed to salvation;*

*tion; in anſwer to that aſſertion of our Author*, That it is not in the Epiſtles that we are to learn what are the Fundamental Articles of Faith, *with ſome others of the like nature. Which is the Reaſon that I give the Title of* a Vindication of the Epiſtles *to the former part of theſe Papers.* P. 295.

*In the next place I have conſider'd the Reaſons our Author has aſſigned for Chriſt's coming into the World. And how neceſſary it was to examine both theſe in order to a more exact conſideration of that one Article this Author has ſo much inſiſted on, the Reader will eaſily apprehend.*

*He tells us in his* Vindication, *that he deſigned the* Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity, *&c. chiefly for thoſe who* were not yet throughly and firmly Chriſtians. *I ſhall not diſpute the ſincerity of his Intention, though I find no ſuch Intimation in the Treatiſe it ſelf. Yet a well-meaning Author, who has appeared very warmly in defence of it, believes that to be his only deſign, though he tells us he had conſidered it with very great care and Application.* P. 6. Mr. Bold.

*This Author alſo is of opinion that there is nothing more required to make a* Man a Chriſtian, *then the believing* Jeſus to be the Meſſias. *But had he given himſelf a little more leiſure to conſider into what faith he himſelf was baptized, or into what he baptizes others; he muſt have acknowledged, that the Explicitely believing in* Father *and* Holy Ghoſt *is as much required of every one initiated into Chriſtianity, as believing* Jeſus *to be the* Meſſias. *For the Faith in the* Holy Trinity *has always been required in order to Baptiſm. Indeed at the firſt, men might be denominated Chriſtians, upon the bare believing* Jeſus to be the Meſſias; *yet when there was more revealed concerning Him, and conſequently a larger faith required, they could no more have continued Chriſtians, if they had not believed this alſo, than if they had ſtill been altogether unbelievers.*

*I ſhall*

*I shall make no other Observation upon what this Author has urged but this, that he has been a little too hasty in concluding*, that if the Reasonableness of Christianity merits no worse a Character upon any other Account,
P. 52. than it does justly deserve for advancing this point, that Christ and his Apostles did not propound any Article as necessarily to be believed, to make a Man a Christian, but this, that Jesus is the Christ or Messias, I think it may with great justice be reputed one of the best books that has been published for at least this sixteen hundred years, *since I suppose he will hardly deny that* Mr Hobbs *writ within that space, who maintained the very same Assertion, as I have farther observed in the following Remarks, though I am afraid with a far worse Intention, than the Author of the* Reasonableness of Christianity *&c. seems to have had in that Treatise. I need reflect no farther upon any thing propounded by this Author, not only because his Papers came abroad after the following Remarks were drawn up, but because there does not seem to be any thing very material, which was not before observed in the* Reasonableness of Christianity *&c. or the Authors Vindication of it.*

*I hope there is nothing in the following Papers that will be mistaken for a Reflexion; for I am sure there was none designed. For I think an Adversary ought to be treated with respect, how wide soever his Notions may be from Truth, if his design be sincere. Which I must confess I cannot but believe of the Author of the* Reasonableness of Christianity *&c. And though I cannot joyn in his opinion, yet I think my self obliged to have so much charity as to suppose, that he would not maintain what he was fully satisfied was an Error. Whether I have said enough to convince him he has been in a mistake, I cannot promise. For I may fancy that a demonstration*

*tion to me which may be no proof to others. I have endeavoured to repreſent his ſenſe with the utmoſt juſtice and ſincerity, and if I have any where miſtaken it, I can only ſay it was both againſt my Intention and Knowledge.*

*And now I have only thus much to aſſure my Adverſary of; that I have not made any Obſervations upon his Book, out of bigottry to a Party, or prejudice to any ſet of opinions. For I have no other Intereſt to ſerve than that of Truth: nor have I any Byaſs to incline me beſides my own Impartial Enquiries. And if they have miſguided me, I ſhall be very ready to ſubmit to better Information.*

THE

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# A VINDICATION Of The Epiſtles, &c.

WHatſoever Deſign the Author of *The Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity* might propoſe in Publiſhing that Treatiſe, whether it was for the Benefit of thoſe, who were not *throughly and firmly Chriſtians*, or to be a General Rule of Faith to all ſorts of Men, it does not ſeem to give ſuch ſatisfaction to an Inquiſitive Mind, as might prevent all Exceptions againſt it, in relation to either of thoſe Ends. Not only becauſe it introduces a new Scheme of Belief in oppoſition to the anciently received Doctrine of the Church, but becauſe it does not anſwer the full Senſe and Intent of *Revelation*, which is the only Reaſon and Meaſure of our Faith.

I ſhall not make it my Buſineſs to compare it with the *Socinian*, or any other *Hypotheſis*, or enquire to what Sect or Party the Author ſeems moſt inclined,

but shall only so far consider his Opinions, as they seem to me to be inconsistent with Truth.

For I cannot think my self obliged to fix any Man to a Party, which He will not own himself to be of, though some of his Opinions should chance to have a Tendency towards it. For that is so unfair, as well as an undecent Method of managing a Dispute, that instead of stifling the old, it may serve only to provoke fresh Opposition; and inflame, where perhaps milder Reasons might convince. And besides, since every one that publishes his Thoughts with no other Design, than for the Benefit of others, or to the End he may be better informed if he be in the wrong, has a right to be treated with equal Charity, or Humanity at least by others, it can certainly be no Prejudice even to the right side, to allow him a Civility, which he has so just a claim to. And therefore I shall think my self concerned to examine the *Reasonableness of Christianity* with such an impartial Temper, as it may justly challenge. And to be the more distinct and methodical in my Examination, I shall consider the chief Parts of it, which are these.

I. *First*, To shew the *Reason* of *Christ*'s coming into the World. Which the Author tells us, was to restore
p. 3, 4, 5. &c. Mankind to that State, which was forfeited by the Sin of our *First Parents*. But as he makes *Adam*'s Punishment to consist only in a *Temporal Death*, or *a total*
p. 10. *ceasing to be*; so does he confine the End and Design of our Saviour's coming into the World, to the freeing us from such a Death only, and restoring us to that Immortality, which our *First Parents* lost. Which overthrows the Notion of our Saviour's redeeming us from an Eternity of Torments, and makes the effect of Original Guilt no more than becoming subject to Death; and so

ſo deſtroys in a great meaſure the Doctrine of *Chriſt's Satisfaction*. But how agreeable this will prove to the Tenour of Scripture, I ſhall enquire more hereafter.

The *Second* Principal Part of it is, to ſhew what Faith is required to make a Man a Chriſtian. And that he aſſerts to be only the Belief of this one Propoſition, That *Jeſus* is the *Meſſiah*, or (which he thinks ſignifies the ſame) *the Son of God*. He does not deny other Doctrines to be true, but maintains that this alone is abſolutely neceſſary to be believed. Indeed we all acknowledge this as the Fundamental Article of our Faith, as Chriſtians, that *Jeſus is the Meſſias, the Prophet that was to come into the world.* But here the difference lies between us; Whether there is not ſomething more required, as neceſſary to be Believed: As that this *Meſſiah* was *God*, as well as *Man*, and that through the Merits of his Satisfaction, he redeemed us from Eternal Miſery, *&c.* For the Deciſion of which we can only appeal to Scripture. II. p. 30, 31, 32, *&c.*

The *Third* and Laſt Part of it, which I ſhall have occaſion to take Notice of, is this: That whatſoever is neceſſary to be believed to Salvation, is contain'd in the *Holy Goſpels*, and *Acts* of the *Apoſtles*: And that the *Epiſtles*, which were only occaſional Writings and Directions to particular Churches, were not deſign'd to deliver ſuch Fundamental Articles as muſt neceſſarily be Believed explicitely by all Chriſtians. And therefore an actual Belief of any of the Doctrines therein mentioned is not abſolutely required to make a Man a Member of the Chriſtian Church: *For*, he thinks, *a Man may be a Chriſtian, and a Believer, without actually believing them; becauſe thoſe whom our Saviour and his Apoſtles, by their Preaching and Diſcourſes, converted to* III. p. 291, 292 *&c.* *Vindic.* p. 31.

*the Faith, were made Christians and Believers, barely upon the receiving what they Preached unto them,* long before any of the Epistles were written: Upon this Supposition the other two Parts of his *Treatise* are built; and therefore it shall be my Business in the first place, to prove that there are Doctrines in the Epistles, distinct from those delivered in *Gospels*, or *Acts*, which are as absolutely necessary to be Believed, and to be made Fundamental Articles of Faith, as any other Parts of Revelation.

It may indeed seem an unnecessary Labour to Vindicate those *Sacred Writings*, which have almost all of them been received, from the very first Ages of Christianity, with as equal degrees of Assent, as all other Parts of Scripture, and some of the Doctrines there set down, confest to be altogether as necessary to be actually Believed unto Salvation, as any whatsoever. For what should the reason of all this be, if the *Epistles* were not real and essential Parts of the Rule of Saving Faith? Was the Church then Imposed upon, or did it of it self enjoin the Belief of any Doctrine as necessary to Salvation, when it had no express Commission from God for it? For one of these we must grant, if the *Epistles* were not designed to deliver Fundamentals to be actually Believed by all Christians.

Now if several of the Doctrines contain'd in those Parts of *Revelation* have all along down from the Apostles time been reputed necessary to be Believed to Salvation, then certainly they ought not to be denied to be absolutely subservient to that End, without the Proof of one, or all of these things.

*First*, That the Authors were not Divinely Inspired: But this is already granted us by our Author, that

that *they were Holy Writers inſpired from above, who writ nothing but Truth.* But what ſort of Truth he here means, ſhall hereafter be enquired into. p. 297.

Or *Secondly*, That the *Apoſtles* had no Authority, or Commiſſion to deliver any thing for a neceſſary Article of Faith. But there can be no pretence for ſuch an Aſſertion, ſince it is granted by our Author, that their Doctrine, as delivered in the *Acts*, does require our actual Belief. Since then what they taught in their Preaching was of ſo great Authority, why ſhould not their *Writings* be of the ſame Conſequence, eſpecially ſince they are allowed by our Author to be of Divine Inſpiration?

If then the want of ſufficient Commiſſion does not ſeem to be an Argument againſt the Doctrines contain'd in the *Epiſtles*, it muſt be made appear in the *Third Place*, before they ſhould be rejected, that none of the Doctrines were writ with any deſign, that all Chriſtians ſhould be neceſſarily required to believe them to Salvation. But how can this be proved? Are there any ſuch hints in the *Epiſtles* themſelves, or have we any foot-ſteps of a Tradition that informs us, that the Apoſtles left them to be received with ſuch an Indifference? For if neither of theſe can be ſhewn, or if the contrary is evident, Namely, that the Apoſtles did not ſubmit their Doctrines to Mens choice, whether they would Believe them or not, without hazarding their Salvation; and if it appear from the deſign of the *Epiſtles*, and from many places of them, which I ſhall hereafter mention, that they did enjoin the explicite Belief of ſeveral of their Doctrines, without which Men could not be ſaved, then we have ſtill the more reaſon to be confirmed in acknowledging them for Fundamentals of our Faith. *Fourthly*,

*Fourthly*, Then there muſt be ſome Contradiction in the *Epiſtles* to the other parts of Scripture, that can prevent their Doctrines from being as neceſſary to be Believed, as any other the moſt important parts of Revelation. But as this can never be made appear, ſo it is not poſſible to ſuppoſe that the *Epiſtles* ſhould contain Contradictions, if we allow what our Author has
p. 297. granted, that they were *Divinely inſpired.*

Then *Fifthly* and *Laſtly*, The only Plea remaining why the Doctrines delivered in the *Epiſtles* are not to be received with the ſame degrees of Aſſent, with thoſe in the *Goſpels* and *Acts*, or that particular *Article* ſo much inſiſted upon in the *Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity*, muſt be, becauſe they are none of them of equal neceſſity to be known to make a Man a Chriſtian. But how does this appear? Are there no great and fundamental Truths inſerted in the *Epiſtles*, as well as in
*Vindic.* the *Goſpels?* But it is urged, That they are promiſ-
p. 16. cuouſly ſet down, and have no ſuch Mark of Diſtinction, as his *Article* is found to have in the *Goſpels* and *Acts*. But this Objection ſeems too precarious. For I queſtion not but I ſhall make it appear, that there are Doctrines in the Epiſtles, that are as much diſtinguiſhed by the great importance which they are declared to be of; and by the neceſſity that is laid upon all Chriſtians of actually Believing them, by the Inſpired Writers, as any other univerſally acknowledg'd Article of our Faith. Indeed they are mixt with other things, which are not of ſuch immediate concern to us; but ſo are the Doctrines contain'd in the *Goſpels*. And therefore if this is a Prejudice to one, it muſt be ſo equally to the other.

Indeed

Indeed this ſeems objected, That though the *Apoſtles* were Divinely Inſpired in their *Epiſtolary Writings*, and although they had a Divine Commiſſion to teach what was neceſſary to Salvation, yet their Commiſſion did not extend to the making any other Article neceſſary to Salvation, than what our Saviour had already declared to be ſufficient for it. And this is manifeſt from the whole Tenour of the *Epiſtles*, where there are no Doctrines propoſed to be Believed upon the abſolute Promiſe of Salvation, and nothing declar'd to be ſo much a Fundamental, diſtinct from what is deliver'd in the *Goſpels*, or *Acts*, as that we cannot be ſaved without an explicite Belief of it. Since therefore the Apoſtles have not laid ſuch ſtreſs upon any Doctrines in their *Epiſtles*, we ought not to do it. And therefore of what uſe ſoever the *Epiſtles* may be to us otherwiſe, for the reſolving Doubts, and reforming Miſtakes, which are of great Advantage to our Knowledge and Practice; as alſo for the expound- p. 295.
ing, clearing and confirming the Chriſtian Doctrine, and 297.
eſtabliſhing thoſe in it, who had embraced it, yet there can be no diſtinct Truths contain'd in them of ſo great Conſequence, in order to Salvation, as there are in the *Goſpels* and *Acts*, where all that is neceſſary to be Believed, to make a Man a Chriſtian, is declared to be ſufficient to that End; and Eternal Life propoſed upon ſuch a Faith, and Eternal Damnation denounced upon a Disbelief; which are not annex'd to any of the Doctrines in the *Epiſtles*. And therefore *we* muſt be very unwary Chriſtians, to lay a greater force upon any Doctrines, than the *Apoſtles* have done, or make any Terms of Salvation, or Church-Communion abſolutely neceſſary, which were never by the Apoſtles ſo declared.

For

For an Anſwer to this, it will be material to Examine, *firſt*, whether nothing is abſolutely neceſſary to be Believed to Salvation, but what is declared to be ſo, or whether any Doctrine, upon which Salvation is propoſed, is ſingly of it ſelf ſufficient for it. And this ſeems to be a Query of no ſmall importance. For if this is made the only Rule whereby to judge of Fundamentals, *viz.* A Doctrine's being expreſly declared, to be neceſſary to be actually Believed to Salvation, we ſhould, I fear, by this means raiſe ſeveral Exceptions againſt a great part of Religion. For if this muſt univerſally hold in matters of Faith, it muſt alſo in thoſe of Practice, moſt of which would unavoidably loſe their Force and Obligation, if the Obſervance of no other Duties was required of us, but ſuch alone as the Scripture had declared to be abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation. In like manner, if in matters of Faith, nothing is to be required for a Fundamental, but what is ſo propoſed, and to which Salvation is expreſly annexed and promiſed, it would very probably make way for a very unintelligible Faith, in which Chriſtians could not poſſibly agree. For if nothing more is to be Believed as neceſſary to Salvation, than what is ſo propoſed, then it will follow, that no more than the bare Propoſition, which is declared to be of that great Importance, is to be aſſented to. As ſuppoſe in that Propoſition, which I ſhall hereafter have more occaſion to conſider, He that believeth that *Jeſus is the Meſſiah, hath eternal Life*; if what is there required to be believed, is ſingly of it ſelf ſufficient to Salvation, then it muſt be ſo, as it is there propoſed, without any farther Explication of it; becauſe there is no Explication propoſed to be believed upon the like Promiſe. From whence

whence it will follow, that the bare Propoſition is alone neceſſary to be Believed, without any other Interpretation, if any at all may be admitted, than what is agreeable to the particular Humours of Men; the unhappy Conſequences of which, will be endleſs Wranglings and Diſtractions. For which reaſon it ſeems evident, that all the Fundamental Parts of Faith cannot be comprehended in thoſe *Texts* alone, which are declared to be of that important Nature, unleſs the full Extent and Meaning was there ſet down and delivered; which I cannot find. And therefore it can't be denied, but that the other parts of Scripture, which relate the Grounds and Reaſons of ſuch a Faith, which is required to Salvation, and that explain the Nature and Extent of it, are to be looked upon as equally Obligatory, whether expreſt in *Goſpels*, or *Epiſtles*.

For beſides, if every *Text* of Scripture muſt be looked upon as ſufficient to Salvation, upon the Belief of which Eternal Life is promiſed, even the very Scripture will hardly be found reconcilable to it ſelf. For tho' in ſome places Salvation is promiſed to thoſe who believe *Jeſus to be the Meſſiah*, yet in others it is declared to be *Life Eternal to know the onely true God, as well as Jeſus Chriſt whom he hath ſent*. Both of which places, if they muſt be underſtood in their limited Sence, will be almoſt found contradictory to each other. Becauſe the one propoſes a larger Faith to Salvation, than is required by the other. Wherefore it ſeems more reaſonable to underſtand theſe, and other places of Scripture of the like nature, in that Sence which is applied to *Faith*, *Fear of God*, *Love*, *Hope*, and the like, when ſingly made uſe of to expreſs the

whole Duty of a Chriſtian, *viz.* That one that is endued with ſuch a *Faith*, or ſuch *Vertues*, cannot be defective in the Belief of all other Articles, or in the Practice of all other Duties. For as any of theſe Vertues, when mention'd alone as ſufficient to ſave us, cannot be underſtood excluſively of all others; ſo when *Believing in Chriſt*, or any other Propoſition of that nature, is alone required to make a Man a Chriſtian, we ought either to underſtand it as ſpoken conditionally, upon a ſuppoſition of the Belief of all other Articles of the Chriſtian Religion; or elſe, as deſigned to denote, that as the believing *Jeſus to be the Chriſt*, is the firſt ſtep to Chriſtianity, ſo he that is once firmly and throughly convinc'd of that, will not deny his aſſent to any other Article of Faith in the whole Chriſtian Profeſſion, that ſhall be required of him.

From all which it is natural to infer, that there muſt be other Articles of Faith in the Scriptures, that are as abſolutely neceſſary to be Believed to Salvation, as thoſe to which Eternal Life is expreſly promiſed; and that many of thoſe Texts of Scripture, which are required to be believed to Salvation, are not of themſelves, excluſive of all others, ſufficient for that End. So that though it ſhould be granted, that there are no Articles of Faith in the *Epiſtles* ſo expreſly enjoined to be Believed to Salvation, as ſome delivered in the *Goſpels* and *Acts*, yet it will not follow, but that ſome of them may be of as important a Nature, and as much to be thought Fundamentals.

But however it muſt be conſidered, *Secondly*, that if it ſhould be granted, that no Articles were abſolutely neceſſary to be Believed, but what were expreſly ſo de-

declared by the Inſpired Writers, yet there may be produced ſome Articles from the *Epiſtles*, that are as much required to be actually believed to Salvation, as any of thoſe delivered in the *Goſpels* or *Acts*, as I ſhall ſhew in its proper place. So that for both theſe Reaſons, ſome of the Doctrines delivered in the *Epiſtles* ought to be as earneſtly preſſed, and enjoined to be explicitely Believed upon hazard of Salvation, as any found elſewhere in Scripture.

There are indeed a great many Truths both in the *Goſpels* and *Epiſtles*, which are only to be Believed upon the general Ground of Faith, which is the Veracity of God. But thoſe of a higher Nature, which have an immediate Tendency to the Salvation of Mankind, and the Method by which our Saviour has obtain'd it for us, are to be explicitely Believed by all, in order to their Salvation. So that in both *Goſpels* and *Epiſtles* there is a twofold Faith requir'd; the one depends upon the general Ground of our Belief, which relies upon the Veracity of God, that every thing which he has Revealed is true: The other reſpects the End for which he has Revealed any thing to us, and that is only the Eternal Benefit and Happineſs of Mankind. So that whatſoever in Scripture relates to this End, is of more abſolute neceſſity to be Believed to Salvation. And this may ſerve for a General Direction, whereby to diſtinguiſh fundamental Truths, either in Goſpels or Epiſtles, or any other parts of Divine Revelation. For whatſoever is propoſed to our Belief, as a neceſſary Condition in order to our Happineſs, muſt be included under this ſaving Faith.

And therefore I ſhall now proceed to ſhew that the *Epiſtles* have as much Right and Title to our Faith,

as it may be conſidered in this laſt ſence, as any other parts of Revelation; ſince they equally treat of the Covenant of Grace, and the Means of Salvation. For whatſoever it is that is required of us to be actually believed, as a Condition upon which our Happineſs depends, muſt be made a Fundamental of our Faith. And therefore if the *Epiſtles* contain in them any Doctrines of this Nature, they cannot be disbelieved, without great hazard of our Salvation.

I. But, *Firſt*, that the *Epiſtles* are to be made part of the Rule of Faith, by which alone we are to be ſaved, as well as the *Goſpels*, or *Acts* of the *Apoſtles*, is evident from the Nature of *Revelation*. For if it can be proved, that the Epiſtles are as much a part of Divine Revelation as the other, it will be no eaſy Task to demonſtrate, that they are not equally to be received; eſpecially if it can be made appear, that the End of their Revelation was the Eternal Happineſs of Mankind, which I ſhall ſpeak to hereafter.

Now this is the very Reaſon and Foundation of our Belief of the Chriſtian Religion; *firſt*, that it is Revealed by God; and *ſecondly*, that it has the Atteſtation of Miracles to confirm it; ſuch as can be done by no other Power, but Divine. For without this we could have no Obligations upon us to believe it, becauſe we could have no certain aſſurance, that it came from God. But whatſoever is thus Revealed to us, we are under a neceſſity to believe, upon the Veracity of Him that Revealed it. And here we are not ſo to divide our Belief, as to confine it to one part of Revelation, and deny it to another, unleſs we are aſſured that it has different degrees of Evidence.

For this would deſtroy the force of Revelation, and re-

reſolve all Religion into the Wills and Humours of Men. There are indeed (as has been before obſerved) different Acts of Faith required of us, according to the different Matter of Revelation. But where the Matter is of as great importance in one place, as in another, there alſo muſt our Aſſent be equal: Unleſs we can prove that there is not the ſame certainty for the Revelation, *i e.* That there is not the ſame Teſtimony of Divine Miracles to aſſure us of the Truth of it.

But here it is not material to examine, Whether the Apoſtles work'd Miracles, to evince the Truth of their Doctrines in the *Epiſtles:* It is enough that their Miracles atteſted their Divine Miſſion, and were ſufficiently demonſtrative, that their Doctrines had a Divine Authority, and Original, and were confirmed by a Divine Power. For the Deſign of their Miracles was not to give Authority to ſuch a particular Doctrine only, but to teſtify in general, that they had a Commiſſion from God, to teach what was neceſſary to be believed, or practiced to Salvation.

Now that the *Apoſtles* wrought many Miracles, ſuch as were before done by our Saviour, for the Confirmation of their Miſſion and Doctrines, is undeniably evident from the whole Hiſtory of the *Acts*, where they are ſaid to heal the Sick, raiſe the Dead, and to be endued with all other ſupernatural Gifts, which might be ſufficient to convince the World, that they received their Miſſion and Authority from God. But to what End ſhould the Apoſtles work Miracles, if after all their Doctrines which they deliver'd for Fundamentals, were not abſolutely neceſſary to be believed? Now Miracles are never wrought but to convince Men of ſome great Truths, which would be

be of great Importance to them, and which perhaps they would not otherwiſe be induced to believe. If therefore the *Apoſtles* had ſuch a Power of working Miracles committed to them, to confirm the Truth of their Doctrines, we are under as great Obligations to make them Articles of our Faith, eſpecially if they were deſigned for ſuch, as any other parts of Holy Writ. Now what Reaſon have we to believe the Holy *Goſpels*, but only the undeniable Atteſtation of Miracles. But are there not the ſame for the Confirmation of the *Epiſtles* too? That is, Were not the Authors Divinely Inſpired, and did they not work Miracles, to ſhew that they were ſo? If then it be granted, that the *Apoſtles* had this ſupernatural Power given them, to be an unqueſtionable Evidence of their Inſpiration, this alone is ſufficient to enforce our actual Belief of the Doctrines in the *Epiſtles*, as much as in the *Goſpels*; unleſs we can ſhew, that the Apoſtles were not Inſpired when they writ them, or that their Power of working Miracles, to convince the World that they were ſo, was then ceaſed, or elſe that they did not deſign any Doctrines in them to be neceſſary to be believed. But if none of theſe can with any tolerable Reaſon be pretended, there can be little excuſe for our not admitting them, as neceſſary and fundamental Parts of the Rule of Faith.

And this moreover ought to make us very cautious how we rejected them, becauſe if we deny ſuch an Authority to the *Epiſtles*, as requires an abſolute neceſſity of believing any of the Doctrines as therein contain'd, we ſhall have no very ſtrong Arguments remaining, whereby to defend thoſe of the *Goſpels*; which have only the Authority of Inſpirations confirmed by Miracles;

Miracles; ſo that they muſt unavoidably ſtand, or fall together. For if it be granted, that the Evidence for the Truth of both be the ſame, and the ſame Divine Authority ſtampt upon both, we cannot deny that the Meaſures of our Belief muſt be equally taken from them both, where the Matter is of the ſame importance; And this will neceſſarily lead us to theſe Concluſions:

*Firſt*, That whatſoever we are firmly aſſured is Revealed by God, we are obliged to believe it upon his Veracity, ſince he neither can, or will Reveal any thing but what is undeniably true. 1.

*Secondly*, That whatſoever is made by this Revelation a fundamental Article of our Faith, we cannot be ignorant of, without great hazard of our Salvation. 2.

*Thirdly*, and Laſtly, For the true Knowledge of any Article of Faith, we muſt not judge of it from ſome particular Place, but from the univerſal Conſent and Harmony of *Revelation*. 3.

And now, ſince the *Epiſtles* muſt be granted to be a particular Revelation, I would ask to what End there ſhould be this Revelation, and ſeveral Doctrines therein deliver'd, which concern both our Faith and Practice, if there was no neceſſity for them in order to Salvation? Why ſhould the Inſpired Writers give any Inſtructions to a Church *for the Commandments of God*, if yet without the leaſt hazard of Salvation, they might be ignorant of them? For it does not ſeem conſiſtent with the End, or Nature of Revelation, which under the Chriſtian Diſpenſation was deſigned only for the eternal Advantage of Mankind, that no parts of it deliver'd in the *Epiſtles*, which are all of them of Divine Revelation, ſhould be abſolutely neceſſary 1 *Cor.* 14. 37.

ceſſary for that End; and that thoſe who had the Name and Benefit of *Chriſtians*, ſhould not be indiſpenſably obliged to form their Faith, or govern their Practice according to its Directions. Certainly any one that reads, and conſiders the *Epiſtles* impartially, muſt judge, that the Authors did deſign ſome parts of them, at leaſt, for Rules to guide Men in the way to Happineſs; without the Obſervance of which, thoſe to whom they ſhould be known, could not be ſaved. For if all the Inſtructions in the *Epiſtles* might be ſafely diſregarded, then their Inſpiration was in vain. Since if Men might be as eaſily ſaved without them, the Revelation muſt be confeſt to be ſuperfluous.

If it be ſaid, that the Doctrines were only writ for the uſe of particular *Churches*, yet that (though it ſhould be granted, which there is no reaſon for,) will prove nothing, unleſs it appears, that there were no general Directions deſigned, which are of the ſame importance to all Chriſtians now, that they could be of, to any particular Church then; for certainly what was neceſſary to be believed to Salvation by the Members of a Church in the Apoſtles days, muſt be ſo now, and to the end of the World.

If it be demanded, that if there are any ſuch Fundamentals in the *Epiſtles*, as we contend for, we ſhould draw out a Scheme of them, juſt ſo many, and no more, that are to be explicitely believed to Salvation, and which will equally oblige all Mankind; tho' we ſhould not be able to ſatisfy this Demand, yet it will be ſufficient to our preſent Purpoſe, if we can produce any Doctrines that are abſolutely enjoined to be believed by all Chriſtians; and that are either diſtinct from, or more fully expreſt, than any of thoſe con-

contain'd in the *Goſpels*, or *Acts*; as I ſhall hereafter endeavour to ſhew there are ſome of that nature, without the Belief of which, though we may grant Men might be ſaved before they were known, yet when they were divulged, they could no more be ſtiled true Chriſtians without the Belief of them, than if they had not at all believed. To inſtance in a like caſe: None could any longer be called *Chriſtians*, or admitted into that Communion, after that form of Baptiſm was requir'd, in the *Name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt*, tho' they might have that Denomination before, who did not acknowledge their Faith in the *Holy Trinity*; ſince as none could be Baptized Chriſtians, without the Confeſſion of that Faith, ſo none could continue in the Number of Chriſtians, that denied it. But of this more in its proper place.

And thus we may be convinced, from the *Nature of Revelation*, that all the parts of it have an equal Authority, and that where the End of the Revelation was the Glory of God, and the Salvation of Mankind, (as I ſhall hereafter ſhew was the Apoſtles Deſigns in writing their *Epiſtles*) there the ſame Acts of Faith are required of us.

But before I proceed any farther in the Vindication of theſe ſacred Writings, it will be neceſſary to conſider an Objection, or rather an Evaſion of our Author's, in his *Vindication of the Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity*, which may ſeem to render what has been hitherto urged ſuperfluous; ſince it intimates that he believes as much of the *Epiſtles, and in as true a ſence as any man whatſoever*. And for the Proof of this, he cites what he had before declared in the *Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity* it ſelf, p. 299. *Theſe Holy Writers*, (viz. *The Pen-men of* *Vindic.* p. 19.

*the Scriptures) inſpired from above, writ nothing but Truth, and in moſt places, very weighty Truths to us now, for the expounding, clearing and confirming the Chriſtian Doctrine, and eſtabliſhing thoſe in it, who had embraced it.* And again, p. 299. *The other parts of Divine Revelation are Objects of Faith, and are ſo to be received. They are Truths, of which none that is once known to be ſuch,* i. e. *Revealed, may, or ought to be disbelieved. And if this* (as he goes on) *does not ſatisfy you, that I have as high a Veneration for the Epiſtles, as you, or any one can have, I require you to publiſh to the World, thoſe Paſſages which ſhew my contempt of them.*

Indeed if he ſaid no more concerning the *Epiſtles*, than what is mention'd in theſe Paſſages, there would not have been ſo much occaſion for a Defenſe of them. But however even theſe do not ſeem altogether unexceptionable; for though theſe allow the Truths contain'd in the *Epiſtles*, to be Objects of our Faith, yet they do not ſuppoſe them, or any parts of them, to be more ſo, than any other places of Scripture, which have no relation to the Salvation of Mankind; and which we are only bound to believe to be true, upon the Veracity of God that reveal'd them. For that this is all which the Author meant, is very plain from what he maintains a little after, *viz. That all the reſt of the Inſpired Writings, or if you pleaſe, Articles, are of equal neceſſity to be believed, to make a Man a Chriſtian, with what was preacht by our Saviour and his Apoſtles,* (by which he only means what is recorded in the *Goſpels* and *Acts*) *that I deny.*

*Vindic.* p. 31.

So that it plainly appears, that all the Reſpect which he profeſſes for the *Epiſtles*, conſiſts only in this: That he believes them to be true; but that the Doctrines

ctrines contain'd in them are no more neceſſary to be actually believed, or to be made fundamental Articles of Faith, than any indifferent or Hiſtorical Matters in the Bible; all which we believe to be true, becauſe they are contain'd in that Book, which we are fully perſwaded is the Word of God. So that a bare Aſſent to them only, as they are true, is no higher an Act of Faith, than the believing that there was ſuch an Apoſtle as St. *Paul*, and that he was the Author of ſuch *Epiſtles*.

But if our *Author* does indeed believe that all is true which is contain'd in the *Epiſtles*, why ſhould he deny that any of the Truths therein mention'd are to be made Fundamentals? For methinks it would be no great Impoſition, to be obliged to believe that as a neceſſary Article of Faith, in order to Salvation, which he is already perſwaded is a real Truth.

But beſides, this is what we contend for, that there are Doctrines contain'd in the *Epiſtles*, that are of equal neceſſity to be believed, to make a Man a Chriſtian, with thoſe in the *Goſpels*, or in the *Acts* of the *Apoſtles*, as being of as great Importance to us; and therefore they are alſo to be believed upon another Ground, beſides that of meer Revelation.

And for the Proof of this, it will be neceſſary to conſider in the ſecond place, the Authority that our Saviour intruſted in his Apoſtles. Which is expreſt in their Commiſſion given them by Chriſt, immediately before his Aſcenſion, in theſe words, *Go and teach all Nations*. And elſewhere, *As my Father hath ſent me, even ſo ſend I you*. Which Commiſſion as it inveſts them with as full a Power of Teaching whatſoever was neceſſary to Salvation, ſo it lays as great

II. Mat. 28 19. Joh. 20. 21.

great a neceſſity upon others of Believing them, as if *Chriſt* himſelf had taught in his own *Perſon*. For whoſoever acts by another's Commiſſion, acts in his Name, and whatever he does by vertue of that Commiſſion, it is look'd upon to be his, who gave him ſuch Authority.

Now that the Apoſtles did not exceed this Authority, or *teach for Doctrines the Commandments of Men*, is very evident, ſince it is granted they were Divinely Inſpired, and taught nothing as neceſſary to be believ'd, but what they received from God. So that all that can be here objected, ſeems to be this; That the *Apoſtles* had no Commiſſion to write any fundamental Doctrines in the *Epiſtles*, but only in their Sermons, which are ſet down in the *Acts* of the *Apoſtles*. If this indeed could be proved, it would be a material Objection, but if there is not the leaſt ſhadow of Reaſon to countenance ſuch a groundleſs Suppoſition, without ſhewing that the Apoſtles did exceed their Commiſſion, though at the ſame time they were Divinely Inſpired, then we are bound to acknowledge that the *Epiſtles*, as well as the *Acts*, are an indiſpenſible part of the *Rule* of our *Faith*; for God himſelf has put no difference betwixt them.

But there is yet ſomething more to be obſerved in the *Epiſtles* written by St. *Paul*, (which are much the greateſt part) and that is, that he received his Doctrines therein contain'd by a more particular Revelation, than any of the other *Apoſtles*. For he was neither inſtructed by *Chriſt* himſelf while on Earth, as not being his Diſciple; nor had he any account of the Doctrines which he taught, from thoſe *Apoſtles* who had conſtantly heard him, but he received all his In-

Inſtructions immediately from Heaven, as he himſelf hath told us in the firſt Chap. of *Gal.* 11 and 12. Ver. *But I certifie you Brethren, that the Goſpel which was preached of me, is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt.* From whence 'tis plain, that his Doctrines were of equal Authority with what were taught by Chriſt himſelf; and that the *things which he writ* (as himſelf teſtifies of them in the 1 *Cor.* 14. 37.) *were the Commandments of the Lord,* i. e. Were of as great neceſſity to be believed to Salvation, as any other parts of Revelation; which cannot in the leaſt be doubted, if we alſo conſider, that Men are to be Judg'd by that Goſpel which St. *Paul* taught, at the laſt Day: As he aſſures us in *Rom.* 2. 16. *In the day when God ſhall judge the ſecrets of Men by Jeſus Chriſt, according to my Goſpel,* which *Goſpel* he muſt mean that *Epiſtle* to be part of: for he had taught thoſe at *Rome* no otherwiſe than by *this Epiſtle*; for he never had been there when this was writ, nor do we know that he had ſent them any *Epiſtle* before it.

But beſides, the Doctrines which St. *Paul* has delivered in this *Epiſtle* to the *Romans,* are no more than what he had before taught to others, as is plain from his own words to the *Elders of Epheſus,* Act. 20. 27. *That he had not ſhun'd to declare unto them all the Counſel of God.* Which he would not have ſaid, if he had a Commiſſion to make any thing neceſſary to be believed to Salvation by others, which was not revealed to them thro' his Miniſtry. So that as both what he taught, and writ in his *Epiſtles,* are the ſame Doctrines, ſo are they both equally Obligatory.

But Laſtly, There is this more remarkable of St. *Paul,*

*Paul*, that he was the *Apoſtle* of the *Gentiles*, and for the moſt part the firſt that had preach'd the *Goſpel* amongſt them. And therefore what he taught could be the only Rule of Faith to them, eſpecially till the *Goſpels* were written, which none of them were, till ſome time after he had begun to preach the *Goſpel* amongſt the *Gentiles*. From whence it follows, that as what he taught was the only Rule of Faith to them, before they could have the *Goſpels*, ſo neither would his Doctrines after the publiſhing the *Goſpels*, be leſs neceſſary to be believed; ſince their Authority would be much rather increaſed than leſſened, by the aſſiſtance of ſo great a Foundation as the *Goſpels* to ſupport them.

What I have here ſaid of St. *Paul*, is not with a Deſign to leſſen the Authority of the other *Epiſtles*; for they are all Inſpired by the ſame Holy Spirit, and are therefore equally neceſſary to be believed; but only as we have a greater Number of his tranſmitted to us, than of all the other *Apoſtles*, ſo I thought it moſt neceſſary to ſhew, that the reaſon why we are obliged to believe them to Salvation, was as great as can poſſibly be produced, for any thing of that Nature.

And thus I hope I have made it fully evident, that the *Apoſtles* had a ſufficient Commiſſion from God, to make thoſe Doctrines which they taught in their *Epiſtles* abſolutely neceſſary to be believed to Salvation. And that they did declare ſome of their Doctrines to be of this Nature, I ſhall come now in a little time to prove.

III. And *Thirdly*, The End and Reaſon for which the *Epiſtles* were written, will make this more fully appear. For to make any thing more firmly believed and aſſented

aſſented to, there is not only required a certain knowledge of its being Revealed, but alſo of the End for which it was Revealed. Now nothing can be more worthy of God, and more beneficial to Man, than the revealing the Conditions, which he has made neceſſary for our obtaining Happineſs; and this is fully done in the Covenant of the Goſpel. And as the Conditions are neceſſary to be known before we can perform them, ſo God has taken ſufficient care to give us a full Revelation of them: *Firſt*, In a large *Hiſtory* of the Method that *Chriſt* made uſe of, for the purchaſing our Redemption, and the Miracles which he wrought, for the Confirmation of his Miſſion and Doctrine. And *Secondly*, In a more full and clear Manifeſtation, by the coming of the Holy Ghoſt, of all thoſe things which were required of us to be believed. And this he intruſted to the *Apoſtles*, who were to that End both Divinely Inſpired, and had the Power of working Miracles committed to them, to eſtabliſh and confirm the Truth of their Doctrines. So that it may be no very great Abſurdity to affirm, that all things which are neceſſary to be believed to Salvation, are not fully and clearly contain'd in the *Goſpels*.

Indeed * *Limborch* in his Conference with a Learned Jew, in his Book *De Veritate Religionis Chriſtianæ*,

* *Tota Religio Chriſtiana, omnia illius dogmata fidei & præcepta vitæ ad ſalutem neceſſaria, quatuor Evangeliis, imo unico* Mathæi *Evangelio continentur: neque ex Epiſtolis Apoſtolorum, imo nec Apoſtoli* Pauli *ullum dogma ad ſalutem creditu neceſſarium proferetur, quod non antea in Evangelio clare expreſſum exſtat. —— Auſim itaque dicere etiamſi ſola quatuor exſtarent Evangelia os perfectum habiturus Canonem ſeu Regulam fidei ac morum*, p. 189.

ſeems

ſeems to have granted more than he had Authority for, in aſſerting, that "All the Doctrines of Faith and "Practice neceſſary to Salvation, are contain'd in the "four Evangeliſts, or even in St. *Matthew* only; and "that none of the Epiſtles of St. *Paul*, or the reſt of "the Apoſtles, contain any Doctrine neceſſary to be be-"lieved to Salvation, which was not clearly and ex-"preſly ſet down before in the Goſpels, *&c.*

Whether all the fundamental Doctrines of Chriſtianity were before laid down in the Goſpels, is indeed made by ſome a matter of Diſpute, but that many of them are not there ſo plain and intelligible, as in the *Epiſtles*, is none. For it may be very juſtly queſtion'd, if the *Epiſtles* had not been written, whether we ſhould not have remained wholly ignorant of the true meaning of ſeveral things in the Goſpels. Particularly as to the *Reaſons of the Death, and Reſurrection of our Saviour*; for I much doubt whether we ſhould ſo unanimouſly have believed, that *Chriſt's Death was a Sacrifice for our Sins*, or that by vertue of his *Reſurrection* alone, we ſhould all be *raiſed again at the laſt day*, from the alone Declaration of the Goſpels. Since neither of theſe can be ſo clearly proved from the *Goſpels*, as from the *Epiſtles*; the latter of which is, I think, no where mentioned in the *Goſpels*, and cannot directly be proved from them. So that all our Belief of it muſt have been by far-fetcht Inferences, which very probably we ſhould never have thought of, had not the *Epiſtles* been written.

This fore-mention'd Conceſſion of *Limborch*'s, ſeems occaſion'd by the *Jew*'s aſſerting, that all their Religion was contain'd in the five Books of *Moſes*, and that they were not obliged to the Obſervation, or abſolute

ſolute neceſſity of believing any of the reſt as part of their Rule of Faith, and thereupon he prefers their Religion before the Chriſtian, as being much more eaſily underſtood, becauſe contain'd in a much leſſer compaſs.

But in Anſwer to this, *Limborch* was under no neceſſity in order to prove the Chriſtian ſuperiour to the Jewiſh Religion, on the account of its Brevity, to confine all the Articles of Chriſtianity to one, or all the *Goſpels*. For he might very fairly have denied that Aſſertion of the *Jew*, for it was only one Sect amongſt the *Jews*, that of the *Sadducees*, who were of that Opinion, and who gave ſuch Preference to the Books of *Moſes*. The *Phariſees*, the more numerous Sect, paid the ſame Reſpect to all the other Inſpired Writings and Prophecies, and placed their Religion, as much in the Belief of them as in thoſe deliver'd by *Moſes*. And indeed if no other Books of the *Old Teſtament* were to be received for Canonical, or part of the Jewiſh Revelation, they muſt have but a very ſmall Eſteem for the Prophecies concerning their expected Meſſiah, in which a great part of their Religion, that wherein their Faith was concerned, ought to conſiſt. For the believing that the Meſſiah would come, is declar'd by * *Maimonides* to be one of the Fundamentals of the Jewiſh Religion.

But if it be *Limborch*'s Deſign in this place (as indeed it ſeems to be) to vindicate the Honour of our Religion, by contracting all the Articles of it into a very narrow Compaſs, that they may be more eaſily known; I think that this does not much advance that

* *Porta Moſis*, p. 176.

End. For it ſeems more for the Honour of God and Religion too, that all the parts, both of Faith and Practice, ſhould be laid down in the largeſt and plaineſt Terms imaginable, to take off all occaſions of Errors and Miſtakes: Which Men would almoſt unavoidably fall into, if all Matters of Belief and Practice were deliver'd like the Heathen Oracles of Old, in a ſhort and conſequently obſcure Form. Indeed it is neceſſary that there ſhould be a Summary of all the Articles of our Faith, which might be eaſily remembered by every Capacity: But it is as neceſſary alſo, to prevent all Diſputes concerning the Meaning of every particular Article, that we ſhould have Recourſe to a large, full, and infallible Explanation of them, ſuch as is all the parts of Divine Revelation.

But that the *Goſpels* do not fully and clearly contain every thing that is abſolutely neceſſary to be believed, ſeems plain upon many Accounts.

1. For firſt, If in the *Goſpels*, or particularly in St. *Matthew* was contain'd the whole Rule of Faith, then the Doctrines therein taught by our Saviour were a ſufficient Rule of Faith to the *Apoſtles* themſelves; but if they were not ſo to them, they cannot be ſaid to be ſo to any others. But that they were not ſo to them before the coming of the *Holy Ghoſt*, ſeems plain from their miſ-underſtanding the Reaſon of Jeſus's being the *Meſſiah*; they thought it was to re-inſtate the Jews in their Temporal Grandeur and Glory: As is evident from that Queſtion they put to our Saviour, *Lord wilt thou at this time reſtore the Kingdom to* Iſrael? But beſides, thoſe Words of our Saviour, *I have many things to ſay unto you, but ye cannot bear them now*, neceſſarily ſuppoſe, that there were other Doctrines yet

yet to be known, beſides thoſe he had already taught them.

2. The *Goſpels* are for the moſt part Hiſtorical, and contain an account of our Saviour's miraculous Birth, the Miracles which he wrought, to confirm his Miſſion from God, his Sufferings, Reſurrection, and Aſcenſion *&c.* are interſperſt with many excellent Precepts, but contain but few, however not all the Matters of Faith.

3. Our Saviour generally deliver'd himſelf very myſtically, eſpecially about thoſe things which concern'd Himſelf: And left Men rather to draw Concluſions from his Actions, for their Belief of him, than from any clear Manifeſtation of himſelf. So that no adequate Rule of Faith could be drawn from the Hiſtory of Him.

4. The Inſpired Pen-men of the *Goſpels* were only to draw up the Hiſtory, without their own Remarks upon it; and therefore were not in that to tell us what we were to believe, any farther than our Saviour had already done through the Courſe of his Miniſtry. And therefore our Faith is not to be meaſured by the Goſpels only. For tho' St. *John*, in the beginning of his Goſpel, gives us larger Proofs of Chriſt's Divinity, than is to be found in any other parts of the Goſpels, by introducing our Saviour with ſuch Names and Titles as were uſually by the † Jews appropriated to their expected *Meſſiah*, and by which both they

† Τὸν τῷ θεῷ εἰκόνα † ἄγγελον αὐτῷ Λόγον ὡς αὐτὸν κρατοῦσι. *Philo.* Lib. de Som. *And in another place.* Τὸν ὃ ἀόρατον καὶ νοητὸν Θεῖον λόγον. Θεῷ λόγον εἰκόνα Θεῷ. Λόγον Πρωτόγονον υἱόν. Lib. de *Agric.* Ὁ δ' ὑπερέχων τύπων λόγῳ Θεῖῳ. Lib. de Som. *In ſome places he calls the* λόγῳ Θεὸς ἄνωθεν, *as* Plotinus *hath alſo done.* En. 5. lib. 5. c. 3.

and the Platoniſts meant a Divine Perſon, and which they were at that time commonly known to ſignifie; yet he has not there deliver'd any adequate Rule of Faith.

5. *Fifthly* and *Laſtly*, The Promiſe which our Bleſſed Saviour made to his Diſciples, to ſend them the *Holy Ghoſt*, to inſtruct them farther what they ought to believe concerning Him, *and to guide them into all Truth*, (which cannot ſignify bringing all things to their Remembrance, but *teaching them all things*, *Joh.* 14. 26.) plainly intimates, that there was ſomething more required, as neceſſary to be believed, which himſelf had not fully declar'd to them. And we no where find, nor have we any reaſon to think that the Diſciples themſelves, who were conſtantly with our Saviour, had any full and diſtinct Notions of all that was neceſſary to be believed concerning Him, till they had received the *Holy Ghoſt*. And therefore all that our Saviour himſelf taught in his own Perſon, or what is revealed in the *Goſpels* only, cannot be made any adequate Rule of Faith.

But however ſhould it be granted, That all things neceſſary to be believed to Salvation, are contain'd in the *Goſpels*; yet ſtill it might be juſtly queſtioned, Whether the *Epiſtles* alſo, together with the *Goſpels*, are not to be looked upon as part of the Rule of Faith, and whether the Explanations and Illuſtrations contain'd in the *Epiſtles* of Doctrines more imperfectly ſet down in the *Goſpels*, are not equally to be believed with the Evangelical Writings. And therefore though it ſhould be admitted, that all, or moſt of the Truths deliver'd in the *Epiſtles*, are only Explanations of ſomething before Revealed in the *Goſpels*, yet ſince the

the Authors of them were Divinely Inſpired, they are to be received as part of the Rule of Faith, as well as the *Goſpels* themſelves; ſince an infallible divine Explanation of a Doctrine is as neceſſary to be believed, as the Doctrine it ſelf. So that if it ſhould be granted, that this was one End of writing the *Epiſtles*, to ſet thoſe Things in a clearer Light, which were before taught by our Saviour, yet this will not be ſufficient to invalidate their Authority, or render them leſs neceſſary to be believed.

For thus far * *Limborch* ſeems to have granted, That though all the Doctrines of Chriſtianity are fully and perfectly deliver'd in the Goſpels, yet God has ſo much expreſſed his Goodneſs towards Mankind, as to take care, by a particular Providence, that they ſhould be very often repeated in the *Epiſtles*, that they might be freed from all Objections, to the greater ſtrengthning and confirming Believers in the Faith. And thus it ſeems very evident for many Reaſons, that the *Goſpels* alone are not to be made the Meaſure of our Faith.

Nor will the *Acts* of the *Apoſtles*, together with the *Goſpels*, afford us a full and clear Scheme of whatſoever is neceſſary to be believed. For theſe alſo are chiefly Hiſtorical; and contain an account of the Miſſion of the *Holy Ghoſt*, of the Miracles that were done by the *Apoſtles*, of the Converts they made to Chriſtianity, and where they Preacht; but we have

* *Verum tanta eſt erga genus hominum benignitas divina, ut quæ in Evangeliis plene ac perfecte tradita ſunt, etiam in Apoſtolorum Epiſtolis ſæpius repeti, & à variis objectionibus Vindicari, ad majorem fidelium in fide confirmationem ac conſtantiam, ſingulari Providentia voluerit.* ibid.

not

not there any full and large account of their Doctrines. We are indeed told, that they Preacht *Faith in Christ Jesus*, and *Repentance towards God*: But few or no particulars of those Duties, or how far they extended; which seem on purpose reserved for the *Epistles*, where they are more fully treated of.

Act. 20. 21.

But it is urged, That if the *Apostles Creed* is a Summary of all that is necessary to be believed; and if all the Articles of that are to be found in the *Gospels*, and *Acts* of the *Apostles*, then it is in them alone that we are to look for Fundamentals. To this it may be answered, That it can indeed hardly be denied, but that we may draw most of the *Articles* of the Apostles Creed from the *Gospels*, and the *Acts* of the *Apostles*; but these are not to be looked upon as the only Fundamentals, unless we also firmly believe the natural Consequences and Conclusions from them, and the frequent Explanations of them, which are set down in the other parts of Revelation. To instance only in the first Article, *I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth.* Now we cannot be supposed to be confin'd by this to the believing just so much of Him, and no more: For we are to understand by these Words, whatsoever is implied in them, and whatsoever else the Scripture has reveal'd to us concerning Him. And the like Rule must be observed in all the other Articles.

And besides, this is justly believed to be the first Fundamental of all Reveal'd Religion, which is supposed in our *Creed*, that the Scriptures are of Divine Inspiration, and that whatsoever is there laid down as necessary to Salvation, must be believed as such: And upon this it is that the *Creed* is built. So that as we

we muſt believe, That Summary of our Faith to be taken from Revelation, ſo alſo that the only true Explanation of it is to be found there. For neceſſary Deductions from ſuch Truths, are as much Fundamentals as the Principles from which they are drawn. So that we cannot in a true Sence believe all the Articles of our *Creed*, unleſs we alſo are perſwaded, that thoſe places of Scripture which contain a full and expreſs Explanation of them, are neceſſary parts of our Faith.

But our Author urges, *That if all, or moſt of the* p. 297. *Truths declared in the* Epiſtles, *were to be received and believed as Fundamental Articles, what then became of thoſe Chriſtians that were fallen aſleep (as St.* Paul *witneſſeth in the* 1 Cor. *many were) before thoſe things in the* Epiſtles *were revealed to them? Moſt of the* Epiſtles *not being written till above Twenty Years after our Saviour's Aſcenſion, and ſome after Thirty.*

To this we may anſwer, *Firſt*, That ſome of the *Epiſtles* were written before ſome of the *Goſpels*, particularly that of St. *John*, which was not writ till almoſt Threeſcore Years after our Saviour's Aſcenſion. So that this Argument will exclude that *Goſpel* from containing any part of the Fundamentals of Faith, as well as the *Epiſtles*. *Secondly*, It is to be conſidered, that a great many of the *Epiſtles*, as the *firſt* and *ſecond* to the *Theſſalonians*, which were writ ſooner than Twenty Years after Chriſt's Aſcenſion, as alſo the *firſt* and *ſecond* to the *Corinthians*, to the *Galatians* and *Romans*, were all written before the *Hiſtory* of the *Acts of the Apoſtles*, which is continued to the time of St. *Paul*'s being firſt at *Rome*, which was not till near Thirty Years after our Saviour's Aſcenſion; and there-

fore

fore that History which takes in all that time, cannot be thought to be of greater Authority, than those *Epistles* which were writ much sooner. So that this Argument, if it is at all to the Purpose, must give the Preference to some of the *Epistles*, at least before the *Acts* of the *Apostles*. But *Thirdly*, It cannot be supposed but that many *Christians* were fallen asleep before the writing any of the *Gospels*, since St. *Matthew*'s Gospel, which was the first, was not written till about Eleven Years after our Saviour's Ascension. So that neither can this Argument be any Prejudice to the Authority of the *Epistles*. And therefore *Fourthly*, It remains that all the Rule of Faith to the Believing Christians, that were Converted for some Years after our Saviour's Ascension, must be taken from what was taught by the Apostles. And therefore if what they then taught was the Rule of Faith to those who were Converted to Christianity, it is very reasonable to suppose, that the *Epistles*, which without doubt contain the very same Doctrines which they then taught, are now to be received as absolutely necessary to be believed. For this we may be certain of, that the contrary can never be proved, that the Apostles, upon their receiving the Holy Ghost, taught the very same Doctrines wherever they Preacht, which they afterwards deliver'd in their *Epistles*. And therefore if they writ no other Doctrines, than what they taught, and what they taught were Fundamentals, then what they writ must be the same too.

And if this should be granted, which the Author of the *Reasonableness of Christianity* so much contends for, *That the Epistles being all written to those who were Believers, and Christians, the occasion and end of writing them*

p. 294.

*them could not be to inſtruct them in that which was neceſſary to make them Chriſtians*; Yet this ſeems rather to ſtrengthen than leſſen the force of the Argument, that the Apoſtles had taught thoſe ſame Doctrines for Fundamentals before, which they afterwards communicated as ſacred *Depoſitums* of their Faith. For it is ſtrange to ſuppoſe, that a Doctrine ſhould ceaſe to be a Fundamental, to thoſe who had known it before. For though the *Epiſtles* might not be written to thoſe who believed all the Truths contain'd in them, to inſtruct them in any thing which they were ignorant of; yet it might be for this End, to put them in remembrance of all the parts of their Profeſſion, to prevent all Diſputes that poſſibly might ariſe; and to remain as exact Rules and Directions how they might convert and inſtruct others.

But ſays our Author, *If thoſe to whom the Epiſtles were written wanted not ſuch fundamental Articles of the Chriſtian Religion, without a Belief of which they could not be ſaved, it cannot be ſuppoſed that the ſending of ſuch Fundamentals was the reaſon of the Apoſtles writing to any of them.* P. 294. But how can it be proved, that all thoſe the *Epiſtles* were written to, underſtood all the Fundamentals of Religion? May there not be ſuppoſed to be ſome leſs knowing amongſt them, and ſome who would not throughly believe ſeveral Doctrines of Chriſtianity, without ſuch an Authority as the *Apoſtles* had, to convince them of the Truth of them? But however if this Argument of Men's knowing the Fundamentals contain'd in the *Epiſtles*, before they were ſent to them, may be ſufficient to overthrow their Authority, the *Goſpels* alſo I am afraid will not eſcape much better. For we cannot ſuppoſe, but almoſt all

Chriſtians were very well acquainted with the Doctrines taught by our Saviour, before the *Goſpels* were written, but 'tis to be hoped that they ought not upon that account to be thought leſs neceſſary to be believed, even by thoſe who had been already converted to the Faith. For certainly they cannot be ſuppoſed to contain leſs fundamental Truths, becauſe they have deliver'd nothing but what was received before for the Doctrine of our Saviour. Nor can it be imagined that the Goſpel of St. *Luke*, which was writ with a particular Deſign to *Theophilus*, who was already a Believer and a Chriſtian, ſhould contain leſs fundamental Truths, or leſs neceſſary to be believed, than thoſe which perhaps were written with a more general Deſign. The *Acts* were alſo written to the ſame *Theophilus*; and therefore if our Author's Argument will prove any thing, it muſt exclude both *that*, and the foremention'd *Goſpel*, as well as the *Epiſtles* from being any part of the Rule of Faith. For they were more certainly written to a Believer and a Chriſtian, and *One who wanted not the fundamental Articles of Chriſtianity, without a Belief of which he could not be ſaved*, than can be proved of ſo much as any of the *Epiſtles*.

And therefore it will follow, notwithſtanding all our Author has urged to the contrary, that it is from the *Epiſtles* as well as the *Goſpels*, that we are to learn what are the fundamental Articles of Faith. For if in the Hiſtory of the *Evangeliſts* and the *Acts*, all things are ſo plainly ſet down, that no Body can miſtake them, it muſt unavoidably be granted, That the *Apoſtles*, tho' Inſpired by the *Holy Ghoſt*, were yet very unfaithful to their Truſt, in clogging Men's Faith with unneceſſary Points of Belief: Since they could not be igno-

ignorant that what they writ would be as much thought neceſſary to be believed, as what was taught by our Saviour himſelf. And therefore the Apoſtles ought certainly to be blamed for writing ſuch Doctrines in their *Epiſtles*, which tho' they were not neceſſary to be believed, might yet give occaſion to a great many unwary Chriſtians, to think far otherwiſe, and embrace them as firmly as any other Doctrines whatſoever.

But if it can be proved, that the great and principal End of the writing their *Epiſtles*, was, to deliver ſeveral Doctrines that ſhould be neceſſarily believed to Salvation by all who were Converted to the Faith, we are obliged to receive them as ſuch. And this might be made appear from very many places of them: St. *Paul* thus expreſſes himſelf, *That if any Man think himſelf to be a Prophet, or Spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write unto you, are the Commandments of the Lord.* And in the beginning of the next Chapter, *Moreover Brethren I declare unto you the Goſpel which I preached unto you, by which alſo ye are ſaved,* &c. *For I delivered unto you firſt of all, that which I alſo received, how that Chriſt died for our Sins according to the Scriptures.* By which Words he re-minds them of a Primary Article of their Faith, without the Remembrance of which, he ſhews they have believed in vain. For the deſign of the Apoſtle's Argument is to acquaint them, that they could not be ſaved, without they kept in Memory what he had before Preached unto them, *v.* 2. which was amongſt other things the fore-mention'd Article, the Belief of which, if there is any Force in his Argument, he declares to be abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation. After this he mentions to them ſome other Articles, which he enjoins them to believe, that

1 Cor. 14. 37.

their *Faith might not be in vain.* And these are the Belief, not only of Christ's Resurrection, but that by vertue of his rising from the Dead, we also should be raised again. And also that *in Adam all die: For since by Man came Death, by Man came also the Resurrection of the Dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* And these are Articles that are absolutely necessary to be believed; for upon these the Apostle lays the great Foundation of Christianity; and yet the Two last of them are not to be found either in the *Gospels* or *Acts.* There are also other places in the *Epistles*, which are expresly required to be believed to Salvation, as *Rom.* 10. 9. *For if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.* And that in *Timothy*, *Without controversy great is the Mystery of Godliness*, that is, of the Christian Religion. *God was manifest in the Flesh.* And in St. *Joh.* Epist. 1. C. 4. *Every Spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh is of God, and he that does not confess it, is not of God*, which shews the necessity of believing Christ's Incarnation. And again, *We have seen and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. And whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God*; which is a distinct act of Faith from believing him to be the Messiah, as I shall shew in its proper place. These Places of Scripture now mention'd are sufficient to shew, that there are Doctrines in the Epistles, that are required to be explicitely believed. And the Apostles did certainly design this End in writing their Epistles, as in the 2 *Cor.* 1. 13. *For we write none other things unto you, than what you read or acknowledge*; *and I trust you shall acknowledge*

*ledge even to the end.* And in the ſecond Epiſtle to the *Theſſalonians*, Chap. 2. Ver. 15. *Therefore Brethren, ſtand faſt, and hold the Traditions which ye have been taught whether by Word, or our Epiſtle.* All which Places, with innumerable others which might be cited to the ſame Purpoſe, undeniably prove, that the *Apoſtles* enjoin'd the Belief of what they writ in their *Epiſtles* as neceſſary to Salvation. And it would be abſurd to imagine, that the Apoſtles ſhould fill their Writings with any of the Doctrines of Chriſtianity, if they did not impoſe a Neceſſity upon Men of believing them. And here it is not material whether the *Epiſtles* were written to thoſe who were already *Chriſtians*, and whether deſign'd to teach them any Doctrines, to inſtruct them in what was neceſſary to make them Believers; but it is ſufficient that they could not continue true Chriſtians or Believers, without acknowledging the Doctrines there deliver'd for fundamental Articles of Faith, and neceſſary to be believed by all Chriſtians.

But however the word *Chriſtians* is often uſed ambiguouſly, and is promiſcuouſly given to all who are Baptized into the Chriſtian Faith. And therefore tho' moſt of the *Epiſtles* might be written to thoſe who were called Chriſtians, yet they might not be throughly ſo, *i. e.* They might not have a perfect knowledge of all the Articles of Faith. As is particularly plain in the *Theſſalonians*, by St. *Paul*'s firſt Epiſtle to them, Chap. 3. Ver. 10. *Night and day praying exceedingly that we might ſee your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your Faith.* So that our Author's Argument from the Epiſtles being written to thoſe who were already Chriſtians, is alſo upon this account very inſufficient to weaken their Authority.

But

But he farther urges, *That the Epiſtles were writ upon*
p. 295. *particular Occaſions, and without thoſe Occaſions had not been writ, and ſo cannot be thought neceſſary to Salvation.* But how can it be proved, that all the *Epiſtles* were writ upon particular Occaſions? For the contrary ſeems plain in ſeveral of the *Epiſtles*. For, though they were directed to particular Churches, yet were they deſign'd for whole *Provinces*; as the Epiſtles to the *Corinthians* were intended for the Province of *Achaia*. That to the *Galatians* for a whole Country; and thoſe directed to the *Theſſalonians* and *Philippians*, were deſign'd for the two Provinces of *Macedonia*. It being uſual with the Apoſtle to give ſuch Preheminence to the *Metropolis* of any *Province*, as to direct to that, what he intended for the whole: Which is ſufficient to ſhew, that thoſe *Epiſtles* were not writ upon any particular Occaſion to thoſe Churches they were ſent to, ſince they obliged a great Number equally with them. Nor can we ſuppoſe them to be deſign'd for thoſe particular *Provinces* only, tho' they ſhould be known to others; for if they only were obliged by them, then no one could be required to obſerve them, any longer than he continued in ſuch a *Province*. For if they affected none out of the *Province*, then thoſe who went from that to another, muſt alſo be freed from all Obligations to them; which is too abſurd to imagine.

The like Obſervations may be made upon other Epiſtles. The firſt Epiſtle of St. *Peter* is directed to the *Strangers ſcattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Aſia*, and *Bithynia*. His ſecond Epiſtle is likewiſe General, and ſo are the Epiſtles of St. *James*, and St. *Jude*. But there is nothing that can be more General than

than the firſt Epiſtle of St. *John*, which tho' occaſion'd by ſome new raiſed Hereſies, yet is directed to all Chriſtians, to give them true Notions of the *Divinity and eternal Exiſtence of the Son of God*, which are proved at large in that *Epiſtle*, in Oppoſition to all Hereſies that then were, or that poſſibly might ariſe concerning them. For all which reaſons it is evident, that a great many of the *Epiſtles* were deſign'd for all Chriſtians in general. Thoſe indeed to the *Romans* and the *Hebrews* ſeem to have ſome things in them, which particularly relate to thoſe Churches. But yet there are a great many Truths in them of general uſe and importance, which ſeem to be deſign'd on purpoſe for all Chriſtians in general.

But to look a little back upon the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*; which if well conſidered, cannot be denied to contain ſome Doctrines abſolutely neceſſary to be believed to Salvation by all Chriſtians, if this may be granted, that the ſame Faith was required, after Converſion, both from *Jew* and *Gentile*. For the deſign of that Epiſtle was not only to convince the *Jews*, that the Reaſon of the Ceremonial Law was ceaſed, and conſequently that they ought to diſcontinue their obſervance of it, and that the *Aaronical* Prieſthood was aboliſhed by our Saviour's Entering upon his Prieſtly Office, but alſo to obviate (which the Author has done with very great care) two Conceptions which Men might be tempted to have of our Saviour. The one was to think him ſome *Angelical Being*, the other ſome great Prophet, like *Moſes*, or ſuperior to him. Now the Author of that *Epiſtle* does plainly deny our Saviour to be of that ſort and order of Beings, that either Angels, or *Moſes* was, in the firſt, ſecond and third Chap-

Chapters, *&c.* He does not only ſet him above them all in a Style that imports Superiority and Pre-eminence, but does it in a ſet of Phraſes, that ſhew him to be of another Nature than they. And to evince the Truth of this, a great part of this Epiſtle was deſign'd. For there was a Sect amongſt the Jewiſh Converts to Chriſtianity, that were not only for continuing the Obſervation of the Moſaick Inſtitutions, but who alſo oppoſed the *Divinity* of our Saviour; and againſt theſe the Apoſtle ſeems profeſſedly to argue in this Epiſtle: Which if looked upon to be writ with this Deſign, is as full a Proof for the Divinity of our Saviour, and the neceſſity of believing it to Salvation, or without which Church-Communion cannot be maintain'd, as need be deſired for any thing of that Nature.

But beſides this Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, there is no queſtion but the very firſt Chriſtians thought almoſt all the Doctrines in every *Epiſtle*, of general Concern, by their conſtant reading them every *Lord's Day* in all their publick *Aſſemblies*; which was done not only amongſt thoſe to whom they were written, but alſo amongſt all thoſe who had Copies of them. And that an *Epiſtle* which was writ to one Church, ſhould alſo be read amongſt others, (which would never have been commanded, if they were writ upon particular Occaſions to any Church,) is enjoin'd expreſly by St. *Paul* himſelf, in his Epiſtle to the *Coloſſians*, in theſe Words, *And when this Epiſtle is read amongſt you, cauſe that it be read alſo in the Church of the Laodiceans, and that ye likewiſe read the Epiſtle from Laodicea*, which very probably is that which is now inſcribed to the *Epheſians*. For it ſeems moſt likely that it was ſent to thoſe of *Laodicea*, where St. *Paul* had never been at that time, they

*Col.* 4. 16.

they having lately received the Chriſtian Religion; and had a wrong Inſcription put to it, by the Collector of the Epiſtles, into one Body: Which was an eaſy Miſtake, conſidering that a Copy of it was very probably at *Epheſus*, as well as *Coloſs* (as appears from the Cloſe of that Epiſtle) and other places. Some indeed are of Opinion, that St. *Paul* did not write any Epiſtle to the *Laodiceans*, and that the Paſſage in the *Coloſſians*, *that ye likewiſe read the Epiſtle from Laodicea*, muſt mean an Epiſtle writ by the *Laodiceans* to St. *Paul*: Of this Opinion is † *Baronius*, and cites both *Chryſoſtom*, and *Theodoret* for it, who thought that St. *Paul* never writ any Epiſtle to the *Laodiceans*.

But there is little ground for this Opinion, eſpecially from the Words in the *Coloſſians*, *that from Laodicea*, for the natural Meaning of them is, that they of *Coloſs* ſhould receive that Epiſtle which was writ to *Laodicea* from thence, and read it in their Aſſembly. And this meaning Dr. *Hammond* applies to it in his Note on the Place. And he is of Opinion, that a Copy of it was ſent from *Epheſus* to *Laodicea*, ſince *Tertullian* affirms that the Epiſtle which is inſcribed to the *Epheſians*, was ſent to thoſe of *Laodicea*. But he thinks this ſolves the Difficulty, that *Epheſus* being the Metropolis of *Aſia*, and *Laodicea* being a Church within that Circuit, it might not only be deſign'd thither as well as *Epheſus*, but that it was alſo Copied out, and communicated to them, and ſo might be called the Epiſtle to the *Laodiceans*, or which the Church of *Laodicea* had received.

But tho' indeed it might have been ſo, yet I think it moſt probable, that it was writ only to thoſe of

† Baronius *Annal.* Tom. 1. *ad Ann. D.* 60.

*Laodicea*, and not to *Epheſus*. For as it is certain that St. *Paul* did write an Epiſtle to the *Laodiceans*, which we have not under that Title; ſo is there great reaſon to imagine, that this Epiſtle was not writ to the *Epheſians*. For St. *Paul* had liv'd three Years at *Epheſus*, as is plain from the Hiſtory of the *Acts*, and therefore it is not probable that he would write to them there, as in the third Chapter, *If ſo be ye have heard of the diſpenſation of the Goſpel given me to you-ward*. And beſides it is very ſtrange, that if this was writ to the *Epheſians*, amongſt whom St. *Paul* had ſo long been, there ſhould be no Salutations in it to any particular Perſons, which is ſo very uſual in the reſt of his *Epiſtles*. And thus it ſeems moſt probable, that this *Epiſtle* was that which was mention'd to be writ to them of *Laodicea*.

And this Remark is the more material, becauſe if this *Epiſtle* is looked upon, as it ſeems deſigned, to contain ſeveral Doctrines neceſſary to be believed by a Church at its firſt Conſtitution, the Doctrines contain'd in it may carry a greater weight with them, eſpecially amongſt thoſe who will admit no other Doctrines as neceſſary to be believed, but what have ſuch a reaſon to confirm them. But however it be, this is certain, that as this *Epiſtle* was writ by one Divinely Inſpired, ſo it is neceſſary to be believed to Salvation in thoſe places, where the Senſe is plain and eaſy, and of the higheſt Importance to us, whether it was written with a Deſign to inſtruct, or to confirm a Church in the Chriſtian Faith.

But to return; Let us ſuppoſe that ſome of the *Epiſtles* contain Matter proper to thoſe Times and Churches to which they were ſent. May not the ſame

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Objection be raiſed againſt the Goſpels, moſt of our Saviour's Parables, and very many of his Diſcourſes relate to the State of the *Jews* at that time, and the Deſtruction of their Nation and Religion, which was ſoon after accompliſhed.

Now there is nothing in the Goſpels, but what was thought at firſt by the Apoſtles to reſpect the *Jews* only; nay, and for ſome time after the Miſſion of the Holy Ghoſt, St. *Peter* particularly amongſt the Apoſtles had ſuch a wrong Notion of our Saviour's coming, as to imagine, that the *Jews* were only to reap the Advantage of it; as may be ſeen in the Hiſtory of the *Acts*.

But tho' in a little time the Reaſon of our Saviour's coming was more fully underſtood, yet at the firſt it was looked upon as particular, and all his Diſcourſes were interpreted to ſuch a Sence. Which ought to caution us in judging of the Epiſtles; which notwithſtanding their Directions to particular Churches, might be deſign'd for general Inſtructions. And we have good Reaſon to judge, that there are no Caſes ſet down, but what may on ſome Occaſions, be of uſe to all Chriſtians.

But what if it ſhould be granted, that they were writ upon particular Occaſions, will this hinder them from being neceſſary to be believed? If it will, then ſome of the Goſpels muſt ſuffer too. For the Goſpel of St. *Luke* ſeems to be writ particularly to give *Theophilus* a more perfect knowledge of thoſe things, in which he had been before inſtructed, as I have already obſerved of it, as well as of the *Acts*, which were writ by the ſame Evangeliſt, upon the ſame Occaſion. In like manner the Goſpel of St. *John* was writ upon a particular Occaſion, to confute the Hereſies of the *Ce-*

*rinthians*, and *Ebionites*, who denied the Divinity of our Saviour (as is confeſſed by the moſt Ancient Fathers, and has lately been very * Learnedly proved) and muſt it upon this account be rejected as not neceſſary to Salvation ? So that if all parts of the Scripture muſt be laid aſide, that were writ upon particular Occaſions, our Faith would lie indeed in a much narrower Compaſs. But we ſhould not be, I am afraid, the better Chriſtians for it.

For tho' ſome things might be writ upon particular Occaſions, yet it will be difficult to prove, that the *Holy Spirit* did not deſign them for general Directions, and as neceſſary to be believed to Salvation by others, as thoſe to whom they were writ. But beſides, whatever particular Occaſions there might be for ſome of the *Epiſtles* yet the general Deſign of them is to ſettle and ſtrengthen Men in the Faith, and to be perpetual Guides and Directions to them in the way to Happineſs; and indeed if there had been no occaſion for this, they certainly would not have been written.

But it was alſo neceſſary that the *Apoſtles* ſhould dictate, and leave behind them ſome certain Meaſures of Belief, ſince their Authority, and the certain Evidence of their Inſpiration would have very great Influence on thoſe who were not yet Chriſtians, that they might be more eaſily perſwaded to embrace Chriſtianity ; and alſo might be of vaſt Importance, for the preventing all Differences that might ariſe about the Meaning of the Goſpels ; and laſtly, would be of perpetual uſe,

* *Vid. Dr.* Williams's *Vindicat. of the late Arch-biſhop's Sermons*, p. 16, 17, *&c.* Joan. Cleric. *in* 18. *prima Commenta. Evang.* Joan. p. 15, 16, *&c.* 8°.

for

for the teaching all ſorts of Chriſtians more eaſily to comprehend the Method, Reaſons and Grounds of the great Work of our Redemption: The two laſt of which are more fully laid down and explain'd in the *Epiſtles*, than in any other parts of Holy Writ. And if the Knowledge of them is neceſſary to Salvation, then it will be as neceſſary to believe thoſe places of Scripture, where they are moſt fully ſtated, and moſt clearly delivered. For ſince there is no part of Scripture, where we are told how we were Redeemed, why Chriſt Redeemed us, and from what, ſo clearly and expreſly as in the *Epiſtles*, we muſt have Recourſe to them, for our right underſtanding of thoſe Doctrines. And therefore there both was an abſolute neceſſity for the writing of the *Epiſtles*, and alſo is for our firm Belief of them as neceſſary to Salvation.

IV. And thus far I hope we have eſtabliſhed the Divine Authority of the *Epiſtles*, and the abſolute neceſſity of believing ſeveral of the Doctrines deliver'd in them. But it muſt yet be confeſſed, that all that has been proved will be little to the Purpoſe, if it can be ſhewn in the *Fourth Place*, that the Doctrines deliver'd in the *Epiſtles* are contradictory to thoſe in the *Goſpels*. But this I don't find in the leaſt pretended; for it would be in vain to ſhew Contradictions in them, after they are allowed to be of Divine Inſpiration. As for there being ſeveral things above our Reaſon in the *Epiſtles*, the ſame Objection may be made againſt the *Goſpels*; but this cannot be ſufficient to invalidate the Authority of either of them. The *Goſpels* and *Epiſtles* both teach the ſame Chriſtianity: And tho' ſome Points of Faith are more fully and clearly laid down in one, than the other, and ſome things requir'd to be believed in the *Epiſtles*, which are

not mention'd in the *Gospels*; yet they do not disagree in any one Particular: But both tend to one, and the same End, the advancing the Happiness of Mankind.

V. And this leads me to consider the *Fifth* Argument, whereby it may appear whether or no the *Epistles* are necessary to be believed, and that is the *Matter* they contain. For this is the only Plea remaining why they should be rejected, because the Matters which they treat of, are of no Concern to us, that they have no relation to the Salvation of Mankind, and therefore cannot be thought necessary to be believed upon that account, which is the great End of Revelation. For here the great stress of the Controversy lies, whether the Doctrines deliver'd in the *Epistles* are of such Importance, as will make them necessary to be believed, or to be an indispensible part of the Rule of Faith. But I hope I have already made it appear, that there are several Doctrines of this Nature in the *Epistles*, from the Apostle's Design in writing them, and from those Texts I have before produced from them; and therefore I shall not insist any more upon this Head.

But our Author objects, that if there are any fundamental Articles in the *Epistles*, yet they are so promiscuously deliver'd with other Truths, that they are not to be distinguished from them. And this he now tells us, was the reason why he *did not go through the Writings in the Epistles, to collect the fundamental Articles of Faith, as he had through the Preaching of our Saviour and his Apostles, because those fundamental Articles were in those Epistles promiscuously, and without distinction mixt with other Truths. And therefore we shall find and discern those great and necessary Points best in the Preaching of our Saviour and the Apostles, to those who were yet ignorant of the Faith, and unconverted.* But

*Vindic.* p. 14.

But how are theſe Fundamental Points to be found in the *Goſpels* and *Acts*, better than in the *Epiſtles*? Are there in them nothing but Fundamentals? Or are not theſe Fundamentals mixt with other Truths of a quite different Nature, that have no reſpect to Man's Salvation? And if ſo, as is very apparent, what mighty Advantage have the *Goſpels* beyond the *Epiſtles* upon this account? Matters of Faith, and Matters of Practice; Fundamentals, and Things indifferent are promiſcuouſly mixt together in both. But yet there is no great difficulty in diſcerning one from another in them. For the meaneſt Capacity can eaſily apprehend a difference between thoſe things which are propoſed to our Belief, and thoſe to our Practice; what are thoſe which have a near reſpect to the Covenant of Grace, and the Means of Salvation, and thoſe which are more forreign to that End. And this difference is as eaſily perceived in the *Epiſtles*, as in the *Goſpels*, becauſe the Terms of Salvation are as plainly and clearly ſet down in one, as the other.

But it is objected, that ſeveral Things in the *Epiſtles* are differently interpreted, and conſequently cannot be abſolutely neceſſary to be believed to Salvation, becauſe Men are not agreed in their Opinions concerning them. To this it may be anſwered, *firſt*, That ſome Men are of different Opinions in their Interpretations of ſeveral places of the *Goſpels*, as well as of the *Epiſtles*. But *ſecondly*, it may be obſerved, that the great and fundamental Truths in *both* have been always underſtood in one and the ſame Sence, by the whole Catholick Church; and thoſe who have diſſented from the univerſally received Interpretation, have been accounted Enemies to the true Chriſtian Faith. For in

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theſe Caſes Miſtakes are generally wilful; and it is not eaſy to interpret any Doctrines in Scripture, differently from what the *Church* has already done, if we take the moſt eaſy and natural Meaning of it. For the Senſe of Fundamentals is not ſo obſcure, but a willing Mind may eaſily apprehend it.

But *Laſtly*, We may add to all this the Conſent of the Univerſal Church in all Ages, for the neceſſity of believing the *Epiſtles*, and ſeveral Articles delivered in them, as neceſſary to Salvation. For they have been hitherto eſteemed by all Orthodox Chriſtians, as part of the *Canon* of Scripture, or Rule of Saving Faith, and received and believed accordingly. And if this Argument will be of no Force to convince us of the neceſſity of believing them to Salvation, we muſt at the ſame time part with one very good Reaſon for our belief of the Holy *Goſpels*. For this is alleged for an Argument by our Church, in the Sixth *Article*, for our belief of all the received parts of Scripture, *that there has never been any doubt of their Authority in the Church.*

And if this univerſal Conſent will be an Argument for the *Goſpels*, it cannot alſo be denied to be a very great Reaſon to perſwade us to build our Faith upon the *Epiſtles* too. For it is very abſurd to imagine, that the very next Ages to the Apoſtles ſhould be ſo far impoſed upon, and ſo down to the preſent Time, as to receive ſeveral of the Doctrines contain'd in the *Epiſtles* for fundamental Articles of Faith, if they were never deſign'd, either by the *Holy Ghoſt* that Inſpired them, or by the Apoſtles themſelves, to be made ſuch. So that to aſſert the contrary, is to affirm that either all Chriſtians hitherto have wander'd in the Dark, or that they were guilty of very great Folly and Superſtition, in making

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thoſe parts of Scripture neceſſary to be believed to Salvation, which were never intended to be ſo.

Some of the *Epiſtles* have indeed been rejected, but ſo have ſome of the *Goſpels* too. But as this was done but by a very few, ſo were they Men of Heretical Opinions. The † *Ebionites* allowed of no more of the Goſpels than St. *Matthew*, and rejected all that was writ by St. *Paul*, calling him an Apoſtate from the Law. The * *Marcionites* owned but ſome part of the *Epiſtles* of St. *Paul* to be Canonical, but they alſo denied the Authority of all the *Goſpels*, except that of St. *Luke*, and then would admit no more parts of it, than would agree with their own Model of Divinity. *Sed huic quidem*, ſays *Iræneus*, ſpeaking of *Marcion*, *quoniam & ſolus manifeſte auſus eſt circumcidere Scripturas*, &c. Which ſhews what an unpardonable Crime he thought it to be for any Man, without a ſufficient Warrant for it, (which can be nothing leſs than a Divine Commiſſion) to pretend to reject any parts of Holy Scripture, and to cut them off from the reſt, which the whole Church had received for Canonical. And thus whoever they were that denied the Divine Authority, and the neceſſity of believing all the parts of Scripture, ſuch as were alſo the *Valentinians*, and *Manichees*, with ſome few others, were always looked upon by the Church, to be no better than Hereticks.

There were indeed ſome of the Primitive Chriſtians, that did not receive all the Books of the New Teſtament for Canonical; but the reaſon was becauſe they were not certain they were writ by the Apoſtles, yet after a little time they were all admitted, and univer-

† Iræn. *Adverſ. Hereſ.* l. 1. c. 26. | * L. 1. C. 29.

ſally believed as neceſſary parts of Faith.

But now by aſſerting the neceſſity of believing the *Epiſtles* as part of the Rule of Faith, I don't mean that none could ever be ſaved, but who had believed them; *for what then*, as our Author well obſerves, *would become of thoſe Chriſtians who were fallen aſleep, before any of the Epiſtles were written?* For no queſtion but thoſe who believed all that was taught them, and lived up to that Knowledge which their moſt diligent Enquiries could carry them to, ſhould be admitted into Happineſs as well as thoſe who had afterwards attained to larger degrees of Faith and Knowledge. Since no one can be obliged to believe that, which he could not poſſibly have any knowledge of. For ſhould we ſuppoſe the *Goſpel* to be ſpread in ſome Heathen Parts of the World, that had never heard of *Chriſt*, no Man certainly would be ſo uncharitable, as to deny them Salvation, if they believed whatſoever they found there, and liv'd up exactly to the Precepts there delivered, though they had never heard of the *Acts of the Apoſtles*, or any of the *Epiſtles*, or no more than one of the *Goſpels*. Or if the Caſe ſhould be thus, that they had no other parts of the *New Teſtament*, than barely ſome of the *Epiſtles*, if they lived up to them in Matters of Faith and Practice, there can no doubt be made but they would be ſaved. So that in Caſes of this nature, the Argument holds as much for the *Epiſtles*, as the *Goſpels*, and nothing from hence can be drawn to the Prejudice of either. But where we have the Priviledge of both, and are aſſured that both are of equal Authority, as being equally of Divine Inſpiration, we are under a neceſſity of drawing the *Articles* of our Faith from them both, as being a moſt exact Body of Chriſtian Religion in all the Branches of it.

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But then ſome may urge, That if this ſhould be the Caſe of thoſe who could attain to the Knowledge of but one part of the Chriſtian Doctrine contain'd in the New Teſtament, that they ſhould as well be ſaved, as thoſe who have all the parts of it, and upon that account are required to believe more, then certainly the Condition of the other would be much more deſirable.

To this it may be anſwered, That this Objection is of little Force, ſince thoſe are certainly in the ſafeſt Condition, who have the moſt Light to guide them. For though a wary Traveller may poſſibly find his way through a very narrow obſcure Paſſage, yet thoſe who take the broadeſt Road are moſt certain of finding the ſureſt way to their Journeys end. But beſides, the more Evidence we have for our Faith, and the greater the Confirmation of it may be, by the abundant Repetition of Inſpiration and Miracles for the Eſtabliſhment of it; and laſtly, the more full, clear and expreſs the *Articles* of our Faith are, and the oftner God has been pleaſed to give us an Explanation of them, ſo much the more likely are we to avoid Miſtakes, to give our unfeigned Aſſent to them, and to ſuffer them to make more laſting Impreſſions upon our Minds.

And thus I hope I have ſufficiently Vindicated the Divine Authority of the *Epiſtles*, and the neceſſity of making them part of the Rule of Faith that's required to Salvation. And we ought to be the more concerned for the Defenſe of them, becauſe ſeveral Doctrines which have been always maintained by the univerſal Church, ſuch as the Doctrine of the *Satisfaction*, and the true *Reaſon of Chriſt's coming into the World*, will not ſo eaſily be maintained without a Belief of them.

But if these sacred Writings are esteemed, as they are, and were really designed to be, the infallible Guides to us in our understanding the Mystery of the great Work of our Redemption, and for the more clearly stating and explaining of all that is required for our Belief and Practice, we are under an absolute necessity to preserve them inviolably, and to vindicate the Belief of *them*, as much as of any other parts of Divine Revelation.

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*Of*

## *Of the Reaſon of* CHRIST*'s Coming into the World.*

AND now I come in the next place to examine the Reaſon our Author aſſigns for *Chriſt*'s coming into the World. And this, we muſt allow, can be underſtood no way ſo well as by conſidering what the Scripture ſhews we loſt by *Adam*. For it is on this that the whole Deciſion of the Caſe depends: Since which way ſoever it is that the whole Bent of Scripture inclines, there we ought to fix our Faith. And here alſo there is no reaſon why we ſhould diſſent from the *Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity*, that *Since theſe ſacred Writings were deſigned by God for the Inſtruction of the illiterate Bulk of Mankind in the way to Salvation, as well as others of larger Capacities, they ought generally and in neceſſary Points to be underſtood in the plain direct Meaning of the Words and Phraſes, ſuch as they may be ſuppoſed to have had in the Mouths of the Speakers, who uſed them according to the Language of that Time and Country wherein they lived, without putting any artificial and forced Senſes upon them.* p. 1. p. 2.

Now what we loſt by *Adam* may indeed be ſeen, as our Author urges, from the *ſecond* and *third* Chapters of *Geneſis*, and that was *Bliſs and Immortality, and a perfect State of Righteouſneſs, which was without any of the Miſeries of Life, or fear of Death.* But what the Puniſhment of his Tranſgreſſion was, or more properly ſpeaking, would have been, had not the *Meſſiah* been then

then promiſed to recover him from his lapſed State, and had not the Merits of his future Satisfaction been imputed to him, and all his Poſterity from his Fall, is not ſo clearly diſcovered by any part of that Hiſtory.

The Sentence denounced againſt him, if he ſinned, was only this: *In the day that thou eateſt thereof, thou* Gen. 2. 17. *ſhalt ſurely die.* Now this indeed does threaten the Puniſhment of Death, or Mortality to the Body, and does not ſeem to imply any future Expectation of Eternal Miſery, for he was from that time ſubject to a ſtate of Death and Mortality. And this is a part of the Puniſhment which devolves on all his Poſterity, 1 *Cor.* 15. 22. *In Adam all die,* i. e. to uſe our Author's words, p. 4. *by reaſon of his Tranſgreſſion,* all Men are mortal, *and come to die.* But though this may be admitted as the natural Meaning of thoſe Words, yet it cannot be infer'd from them, that the Soul alſo ſhould be ſubject to the ſame Death and Mortality with the Body, as our Author contends, or that the whole Man ſhould ceaſe to p. 15. be, or that *By the loſs of Men's Souls in Scripture* could only *be meant the loſs of their Lives.* For beſides this Opinion ſeems wholly precarious, and is no way countenanc'd by this other part of the Sentence: *Curſed is the Ground for thy ſake, in ſorrow ſhalt thou eat of it all the days of thy Life, in the ſweat of thy Face ſhalt thou eat Bread, till thou return unto the Ground, for out of it waſt thou taken, for Duſt thou art, and to Duſt ſhalt thou return.* Which words will by no means infer that Concluſion p. 7. which our Author draws from them, *viz. That his Life ſhould end in the Duſt out of which he was made, and to which he ſhould return, and then have no more Life or Senſe, than the Duſt had out of which he was taken.* For it is not poſſible that the Mortality of the *Soul* ſhould be infer'd from

from hence: Nay, the directly contrary ſeems neceſſarily implied, *For the returning unto the Ground, for Duſt thou art, and to Duſt ſhalt thou return,* can relate only to that part of Man, which was formed out of the Duſt. And therefore if the Soul was of a different Original, and of a Divine Extract, as we are told in *Gen.* 2. 7. *And God formed Man of the Duſt of the Ground, and breathed into his Noſtrils the breath of Life, and Man became a living Soul:* It is plain that the Soul could not be included in the Sentence. And therefore by this Sentence of Death, or that of *to Duſt ſhalt thou return,* cannot be underſtood a total ceaſing to be, or a loſing of *all Actions of Life and Senſe,* which the *Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity* ſo much contends for. p. 6.

But moreover; if we are to underſtand no more of the Nature and Extent of the Sentence, than is to be found in the *ſecond* and *third* Chapters of *Geneſis,* and may have no Recourſe to the *Goſpel Diſpenſation,* eſpecially to that part of it deliver'd in the *Epiſtles,* I would deſire to know by what Authority our Author includes the Poſterity of *Adam* in the Puniſhment, and p. 6. makes them ſubject to Death for his Diſobedience, ſince there is not the leaſt mention of them in the Sentence. For that ſeems directly level'd againſt him, and not to include any others in it. Indeed our Author proves it from *Rom.* 5. 12. *By one man Sin entred into the* p. 4. *world, and Death by Sin.* But if he has no other Proof for it, than from the *Epiſtles,* this would be no ſufficient Reaſon to make it an Article of our Faith, ſince according to him we are not to fetch any Articles of Faith from the *Epiſtles.* So that this is all would be left for us to believe as to this, that all Men are ſubject to Death, but that God has not indiſpenſibly required us

to

to believe, that it was a Puniſhment due to all Men for *Adam*'s Tranſgreſſion. From whence it appears, that the full Extent even of *Adam's* Puniſhment cannot be gather'd from the Sentence denounc'd againſt him, which in the plaineſt Sence of the Words, could only threaten Death or Mortality to the Body, and not a Death of the ſame kind to the Soul. Nor that even this can be proved from the Nature of the Sentence, as we find it recorded in the *ſecond* and *third* Chapters of *Geneſis*, that Death was entail'd upon all *Adam*'s Poſterity for his Offence. And therefore it muſt be from the *New Teſtament*, where we have more Light, and larger Diſcoveries to guide us, that we muſt expect a clearer Account of the Nature of the Puniſhment that was due to *Adam*, and what ſort of Death it was that his Poſterity was freed from by Chriſt's Coming into the World.

But by the way, ſince his chief Argument for his Notion of *Adam*'s Puniſhment, is, that nothing more is meant in the Sentence denounc'd againſt him, I would deſire to know, why by Death in that place may not be meant an Eternal Loſs of God's Favour, in a State of Exiſtence, as well as by never Dying in many other places, is to be underſtood an Eternal Enjoyment of Happineſs, or a Freedom from Eternal Miſery. For by *not Dying* in ſuch like places, is not meant an Exemption from the common Fate of all Men, but only not Dying after that manner which others do, who believe not in *Chriſt*. And if by this, *Joh.* 11. 26. *He that believeth on me ſhall never dye*, or as in another place, *He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that ſent me, hath everlaſting Life, and ſhall not come into condemnation*, Joh. 5. 24. can only be interpreted of an Immortal State

State of *Bliſs* and *Immortality*, then I ſee no Reaſon why the Sentence of *Death*, or Condemnation may not imply an Eternal Loſs of that Happineſs in a State of Miſery, eſpecially ſince I have already ſhewn, that the Mortality of the Soul could not be included in that Sentence of Death denounc'd againſt *Adam*.

And beſides if there have been different degrees of Happineſs or Miſery in the other World, from the very beginning, as is evident from the whole Tenour of Scripture, and if the Souls of Men have been immortal, as may be eaſily evinc'd from Scripture and Philoſophy, unleſs we can prove that any of them have been annihilated by God, then we have reaſon to believe that the Puniſhment due to *Adam*, and all his ſinning Poſterity, was to have been Eternal Miſery.

From all this it is evident, that *Adam*'s Puniſhment does not appear from Scripture to conſiſt only in a Temporal Death; but that as he fell from a State of perfect Obedience, as our Author has granted, *p.* 3. and was conſequently uncapable of pleaſing God; ſo the nature of his Puniſhment, and that which all Mankind ſhould have undergone, *for all were Sinners*, will be beſt known from what the Scripture declares concerning the Reaſon of Chriſt's coming into the World. And that was to make Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World, and to reſtore Mankind to the Favour of God, by ſuffering in our ſtead, and being made Sin for us. And that this was the true End of his Coming into the World, and of his Sufferings, is evident from the Predictions concerning him, and from the Conſent of both *Goſpels* and *Epiſtles*. The Propheſy of *Iſaiah* is very full and expreſs in aſſigning the End of Chriſt's Coming. *Surely he hath born our*

Iſa. 53. *Griefs, and carried our Sorrows. He was wounded for our Tranſgreſſion, and was bruiſed for our Iniquities. He was numbred with the Tranſgreſſors, and he bore the ſin of many, and made Interceſſion for the Tranſgreſſors.* All which are ſo very plain and intelligible, that the Force of them cannot be evaded. So that the true End of Chriſt's Coming, was not only to obtain for us Bliſs and Immortality, which we loſt by *Adam*, but alſo in order to effect that, to redeem us from our Sins, and the Guilt of them, and to deliver us from the Wrath to come, by the Propitiatory Sacrifice of himſelf for us.

We have alſo this End of Chriſt's Coming to ſave Sinners, often mention'd in the *Goſpels*. *Thou ſhalt call*
Mat. 1. 21. *his Name Emanuel, for he ſhall ſave his people from their ſins.* And, *Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the*
Joh. 1. 29. *ſins of the World.* And our Saviour himſelf hath aſſured us, if we can believe his own Words, *That God ſo loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth on him ſhould not periſh*, i. e. Should not Die eternally, or be for ever Miſerable, *but have everlaſting Life. For God ſent not his Son into the World to*
Joh. 3. 16, 17. *condemn the World, but that the World through him might be ſaved.* For would not the Condition of all Mankind have been eternally miſerable, without Chriſt's coming into the World; but their only Puniſhment have been only a ceaſing to be after Death, I think it is neither an Abſurdity or Hereſy to ſay, That it would have been much more advantagious for Mankind that *Chriſt* ſhould never have come into the World; ſince it would have been much better that all Men ſhould have had an End put to their Beings by Death, than that part of Mankind only ſhould be ſaved, as it now will be, and the reſt be Condemned to Eternal Miſery, though

it

it be by their own Defaults. For the Punishment of even all Mankind by such a Death, does not seem to bear a sufficient Proportion to the Eternal Misery of but one Soul. So that we must allow that Christ's coming into the World was to save those that believe and repent, from Eternal Torment in another World, or else that his Coming to save us was a general Disadvantage.

But moreover, we have several other Expressions in Scripture, of *Christ's Dying for us while we were yet Sinners*; *That he was a Propitiation for our Sins*; *He was made Sin for us, who knew no Sin. Hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us, who his own self bare our Sins in his own Body on the Tree*; with innumerable others to the same Purpose, which do undeniably evince the true End of Christ's Satisfaction, *viz.* That the suffering for our Sins, and the Substitution of himself in our stead, was *to deliver us from the Wrath to come.* Which Expression can signify no otherwise, than that Christ by his Meritorious Oblation and Sacrifice of himself, hath delivered us from the Eternal Misery which we must otherwise have suffer'd in the World to come. For there is no other Wrath which Good Men are exempted from; for they are still as much expos'd to the Troubles and Miseries of this Life as before, and as much, and in the same manner as before subject to Mortality. Nor can this mean a Freedom from an eternal ceasing to be after Death; for that would make no sense of the word *Wrath*, or the *fiery Indignation of God*, which very emphatically denotes a future Punishment after this Life. But was it possible to wrest the Scriptures to any other sence, or to make it appear, that they do not signify what we

Rom. 5. 8. 1 John 4. 10. 2 Cor. 5. 21. 1 Thess. 1. 10.

pretend they do; yet were not Chriſt's Suffering a Satisfaction for our Sins, his manner of Dying can be no way accounted for, wherein he ſeem'd to ſhew much leſs Courage and Reſolution than either any of his Diſciples, or the lower Rank of Martyrs. They ſuffer'd Joyfully, and with the greateſt Reſolutions, but he felt in himſelf dreadful Agonies, and endured bloudy Sweats, and ſeem'd almoſt like One in Deſpair, when he cry'd out, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me.* All which can have no good Reaſon aſſign'd for them, unleſs we allow that he ſuffer'd in our ſtead to ſatisfy God's Juſtice, and bore our Sins in his own Body, and became a Propitiation for us, which is what we mean by Satisfaction.

But we do not hereby mean that Chriſt ſuffered the ſame Puniſhment which we ſhould have done, but only that the Dignity of his Perſon made his Sufferings equivalent to the Eternal Puniſhment of a whole World of Sinners. Nor will this Notion of Chriſt's Satisfaction take away the Belief of God's freely forgiving Sinners, as ſome late *Socinian* Writers have pretended; for as Chriſt freely offer'd himſelf to ſuffer for us, ſo God freely without any Deſert of ours, accepted of his Satisfaction which he was no way obliged to.

But beſides, the Types and Repreſentations of our Saviour's Sacrifice for us, by the *Goat* that was ſlain for
Lev. 16. a *Sin-offering*, to make an Attonement for the People, and by the Sins of the People being transferr'd upon the *Scape-Goat*, clearly prove, that Chriſt's Satisfaction muſt be alſo for our Sins. And thus was God's Juſtice ſatisfy'd by the Puniſhment of Sin, not in the Perſons offending, but in the Eternal Son of God, who paid the Ranſom for them with his own Bloud. And therefore

thoſe

those who deny that Christ died for us in that Sense, do in effect deny that he properly died for us at all, because they do not assign the true Reasons for it, which are declar'd in Scripture.

But that those Arguments from Scripture of Christ's dying for us, and in our stead, follow from the easy and natural meaning of those Texts, I shall evince from other Expressions in Scripture of the like Nature, and from common Customs and Ways of speaking in the World: Whereby it will appear, that no other Interpretation can possibly be put upon them. Thus in the *Lamentations: Our Fathers have sinned and are not, and we have born their Iniquities*, i. e. Have suffered Punishment for their Sins: So Christ's bearing the Sins of many, can only be understood of suffering for them. So in *Ezekiel: The Soul that sinneth it shall die, the Son shall not bear the iniquity of the Father*, that is, shall not suffer for his Sin. And also by one Man's suffering for another, is meant a transferring the Punishment upon himself, as in the Words of St. *Peter* to our Blessed Saviour, *I will lay down my Life for thee*, i. e. To save or redeem thine. And the Expression of *Caiphas* does also import the same, *It is expedient for us that one Man should die for the people, and that the whole Nation perish not*, i. e. It is necessary that One should die, to free the rest from Destruction. And therefore he advised, that Christ should be sacrificed, to prevent the Ruine of their Nation by the *Romans*. And to the same sense are the words of *Jehu: If any of the men escape, he that letteth him go, his Life shall be for the Life of him*, i. e. He shall suffer the Punishment design'd for the other.

Ch. 18. v. 20.

Joh. 13. 38.

2 Kings 10. 24.

We may add to this the Expressions that occur in Profane Authors, that signifie the suffering of one for another.

another. For by their *expiare orimina*, or *scelus*, *piaculum fieri*, *populum lustrare*, and the like, they generally meant a freeing others from an impending Evil, by suffering the Punishment in their stead. And this is very plain by a great many Instances in History; particularly in that noted one of the *Decij*, who sacrificed themselves for the good of their Country, or offered themselves for an Expiation of the rest. And this Custom of sacrificing one for all, was very common with the Heathens, almost in all Ages. And they have used such Expressions for it, as are used in Scripture, to denote the great Piacular Sacrifice for the Sins of the whole World. As in the * Tragedian:

Τούτους πῶς διαφθεῖράι με δεῖ,
Ἐξὸν περὶ πάντων μίαν ὑπερδοῦναι θανεῖν.

*That it was not lawful for him to suffer the Destruction of so many things, when he might redeem them with the Sacrifice of one Life, that of his Daughter.* And a little after he adds:

Τῇ ἐμῇ δὲ παιδὶ στέφανος, ἢ μία μόνη
Πόλεως θανοῦσα τοὺς δ' ὑπερδοθήσεται,
Καὶ τὴν τεκοῦσαν, καὶ δύω γ' ὁμοσπόρους
Σώσει.

*That his Daughter would receive abundant Honour by offering her self for a Sacrifice or Expiation to save both the City, her Mother, Sisters, and nearest Relations.*

There might be brought innumerable Instances of this Nature, out of the most Ancient *Greek* and *Latin*

* *Euripid. Erecht.* Tom. 2. p. 468. Ed. Cantab.

Histo-

Historians, to shew that by a Man's being a Sacrifice they meant a suffering for, and in the stead of others, to transfer the Faults of others upon himself: Which are sufficient to vindicate our interpreting those places of Scripture that mention the Sacrifice of Christ, to the sence of a Satisfaction for the Sins of the World, since they cannot possibly bear any other Meaning.

So that the natural Result of all will be this; That as the Scripture has in very many places assured us, that Christ died for our Sins, and in our stead, by bearing our Sins in his own Body, thereby to deliver us from the Wrath to come, and that those are the true Interpretation and Sence of those places, which the Words do most naturally import; so is it most evident, that the End of Christ's Coming into the World, was for some other Design than to give us a Title to Immortality: And that was to put us in a Condition of saving our selves from Everlasting Misery, which we should otherwise most unavoidably have suffered. And therefore if either *Gospels* or *Epistles* may be allowed to be true, that cannot be the only End of Christ's Coming into the World, which is assign'd by the Author of the *Reasonableness of Christianity*. For certainly that is the most true, and most necessary to be believed, which is most agreeable to Divine Revelation.

*What*

## *What we are to Believe concerning* CHRIST.

I Come now to examine that part of the *Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity*, which I propoſed in the laſt place to conſider. And this relates to our Faith in Chriſt, which the Author makes to conſiſt in the Belief of this one Article, *That he is the Son of God, the Saviour of the World, or the Meſſiah.* And for the Proof of this he cites very many places of Scripture: As *Joh.* 3. 36. *He that believeth on the Son hath Eternal Life, and he that believeth not the Son, ſhall not ſee Life.* And in the next Chapter, p. 25, 26, &c. from the Belief of the *Samaritans*, who ſaid to the Woman, *We believe not any longer becauſe of thy ſaying, for we have heard our ſelves, and do know that this is indeed the Chriſt the Saviour of the World.* And from the words of St. *Peter*, *Lord to whom ſhall we go? Thou haſt the words of Eternal Life, and we believe, and are ſure that thou art the Meſſiah, the Son of the Living God.* And from hence he gathers, that this was the Faith which diſtinguiſht them from Apoſtates and Unbelievers; and was ſufficient to continue them in the Rank of the Apoſtles. And that it was upon the ſame Profeſſion that *Jeſus* was the *Meſſiah, the Son of the living God*, owned by St. *Peter*, that our Saviour ſaid he *would build his Church*, Matth. 16. 18.

The Belief of this one *Article*, as the only neceſſary one to Salvation in the New Covenant, is the ſame with

with what is maintain'd by Mr. *Hobbs*, and proved after the very ſame manner, as may be ſeen by any one that will take the Pains to read the Eighteenth Chap. of his Book *De Cive*, which treats of *Religion*, Sect. 5. *&c.* His words are, *Credere in Chriſtum quid eſt? Vel fidei in Chriſtum quænam propoſitio eſt objectum?* To which he anſwers, *Credere in Chriſtum eſt nihil aliud quam credere Jeſum eſſe Chriſtum, nimirum illum, qui ſecundum* Moſis *& Prophetarum* Iſraelitorum *vaticinia, venturus erat in hunc mundum, ad Inſtituendum Regnum Dei.* And then after he has brought very many Proofs out of the *Goſpels* and *Acts*, the very ſame which our Author has done, he tells us that *Alia fides ad vitam æternam præter illum Articulum non requirebatur*, Sect. 10. And that *Ubicunq; legimus ſervatorem noſtrum cujuſpiam fidem laudaſſe, vel dixiſſe fides Tua te ſalvum fecit, vel ſanaſſe quempiam propter fidem, ibi propoſitio credita alia non erat quam hæc, Jeſus eſt Chriſtus, vel directe vel per conſequens.*

I need not produce more Inſtances from Mr. *Hobbs*, to ſhew that our Author and he agree concerning the neceſſity of Believing this one Article only; and have taken the ſame Method for the Proof of it, by citing ſeveral Texts from the Preaching of our Saviour, and his Apoſtles, in the *Acts*, and no farther. For if any one will be ſo curious as to read them both over, he will find, that they only differ ſo much as a Copy does from an Original.

But it is not my Deſign by this to poſſeſs any one with a Belief that our Author's Doctrine is falſe, becauſe it is the very ſame with that of Mr. *Hobbs*. For it muſt be granted, that can be no good Reaſon for rejecting it, if it be otherwiſe found agreeable to the whole Tenour of Scripture: Which it ſhall now be my Buſineſs to enquire.

But in order to this it may be neceſſary to examine whether *Son of God*, and *Meſſiah*, or *Chriſt*, always ſignifie the ſame in Scripture, which our Author, as well as Mr. *Hobbs* ſo much contend for. And indeed it may not perhaps appear that they are of different Signification from ſome of thoſe Texts which have been made uſe of to prove it. As where *Son of God* and *Chriſt* are mention'd in the ſame Propoſition, particularly in *Act.* 8. 37. *I believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God.* For there *Chriſt* being part of the ſubject of the Propoſition, and upon that account might be made uſe of as a proper Name only to denote the Perſon, may not neceſſarily imply, that in all other places it imports a different Sence from the *Son of God.* Nor do the Confeſſions of *Martha* and St. *Peter*, as conſidered in themſelves, ſeem neceſſarily to infer a difference between *Chriſt*, and the *Son of God. We believe, and know that thou art the Chriſt the Son of the Living God.* For they may poſſibly expreſs no more than different Denominations of the ſame Thing, and only mean, that they believed him to be the Chriſt, who was alſo called the Son of God, which was to be one of the Titles and Characters of their Meſſiah. But if theſe Paſſages, as ſingly conſider'd, ſhould be granted not to prove a Difference, yet neither can the contrary be infer'd from them. And we can with as much, if not more reaſon conclude, that one of thoſe Terms does imply a larger Signification than the other, even in theſe Texts, as it can be evinc'd, on the other ſide, that they do not; eſpecially if we compare them with the Sence they moſt naturally bear in other places. For it ſeems evident from very many Paſſages of Scripture, that *Son of God* is an Expreſſion that denotes our Saviour's Divinity,

and

and is not a Title only attributed to him, either upon account of his Office as *Meſſiah*, or by reaſon of his Miraculous Birth, or *Conception by the Holy Ghoſt*. And this appears from thoſe Texts in *Heb.* 1. *God who ſpake in times paſt by the Prophets, has in theſe laſt days ſpoken unto us by his SON, whom he hath appointed Heir of all things, and by whom alſo he made the World.* Now if by *Son* in this place is not meant his being ſo before his coming into the World, as Meſſiah, he is very improperly called *Heir of all things*, for it ſhould otherwiſe have been *Heir* of thoſe things which were after he had an Exiſtence. So alſo, *by whom he made the Worlds*, neceſſarily ſhew, that he was *Son of God* before the beginning of the World. And again, *When he bringeth in the firſt Begotten into the world, he ſaith, And let all the Angels of God worſhip him.* Which Adoration we can hardly ſuppoſe would be required of Angels, upon the alone account of his being the Meſſiah, conceived by the Holy Ghoſt, and born of a Virgin. But the cauſe of this is laid down in the 8 ver. *For unto the SON he ſaith, Thy Throne O God is for ever and ever.* Which gives a plain reaſon why he ſhould be worſhiped even by Angels, as *Son of God*, becauſe himſelf was GOD from all Eternity.

To this we may add thoſe words delivered by our Saviour, in that Form of Baptiſm, which he commanded his Diſciples to obſerve in initiating Men into Chriſtianity, to ſhew that the term *Son* muſt ſignify a *God* by Nature. *Go and teach all Nations, Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the SON, and of the Holy Ghoſt.* Where if *Son* muſt be interpreted of his being ſo only by his Birth and Office, it will lead us into a very unintelligible Faith. Where an equal Belief is

required, and yet in very unequal Perſons: One a *God* from all Eternity, and another of no longer Exiſtence, than ſince his being born of a Virgin. So that if *Son of God* in that place does not mean our Saviour's Divinity, we muſt allow it to be very aſſuming in our Saviour, to oblige his Followers to the ſame Faith in, and Dependance on him, who was not God, as on him who was ſo from all Eternity. And therefore it appears that *Son of God* does imply an Equality with the Father, and conſequently muſt be underſtood of Chriſt's being *God* by Nature.

But beſides, if *Son of God* does no where neceſſarily import any more than his being ſo by his *miraculous Conception*, or from his *Office*; upon what Ground was it thought by the whole Church to ſignifie A *God* by Nature; or by what Authority was it inſerted in our *Creeds*, that he was *begotten before all Worlds*, if there is no intimation of it in Scripture, or if the Title of *Son of God* in Scripture does no where imply that he was ſo before his being born of a Virgin. So that we muſt either renounce that Article in our Creed, or believe that the ſignification which is there given of the *Son of God* has its Foundation in Holy Writ.

Indeed *Adam* and others are called *Sons of God* in Scripture, but it is plain that Title when attributed to our Saviour, ſignifies very differently from it, when ſpoken of them, becauſe our Saviour is called in very many places, *the only begotten Son of God*, which could not have been affirmed of him, if he was not ſo upon a very different account, from what *Adam*, or others were.

But beſides, it ſeems evident that *Meſſiah* and *Son of God* are not ſynonimous Terms, from what St. *John* tells

tells us, that his Goſpel was written, that we might believe that *Jeſus is the Chriſt, the Son of God*, i.e. That we might be perſwaded to believe the one, and the other, or that there was more to be believed by every Chriſtian, than that Jeſus was the *Meſſiah*, for he muſt alſo be acknowledged to be the *Son of God*, i.e. *God*. And that this muſt be the meaning of theſe Words of St. *John*, is plain from what is generally allowed by the ancient Fathers, to have been the Deſign of his Goſpel, which was to aſſert the Divinity of Chriſt, againſt thoſe that oppoſed it, as he has done at large in his firſt Chapter. And if this cannot be queſtion'd to have been St. *John*'s Deſign in his Goſpel, the foremention'd Propoſition muſt mean more, than that was all that was requir'd to be believed, that Jeſus was the Chriſt; and conſequently that *Son of God* is of a larger ſignification than *Meſſiah*. For if they mean only the ſame, then St. *John* himſelf does not aſſign the true Reaſon for his writing that Goſpel: For it appears that he had certainly another End in it, than barely to prove Jeſus to be the Meſſiah. But if they mean differently, and *Son of God* does there denote Chriſt's Divinity, then we have in that forementioned Paſſage the whole Intention of the Apoſtles aſſign'd for his writing that *Goſpel*, namely, To ſhew that *Jeſus* was the *Chriſt*, and that he was *God*. *Joh.* 20. 31.

We may add to all this, that the *Jews* (from whom we may beſt underſtand the meaning of that Expreſſion) believed that *God* was meant by it. *For a good work*, ſay they, *we ſtone thee not, but for Blaſphemy, and that becauſe thou being Man, makeſt thy ſelf God*; which was only by ſaying, that he was the *Son of God*. Which ſhews that they underſtood more by the *Son of God*, than being only Joh. 10. 33. *ver.* 36.

only the *Messiah*. And this Interpretation the High-Priest put upon it, when he accus'd him of Blasphemy, for saying he was the *Son of God*, Mat. 26. 63.

But it will probably be objected to this, that our Saviour has himself explain'd what he meant by *Son of God*, in his Answer to the Jews, when they accus'd him of Blasphemy: *Is it not written in your Law, I said ye are Gods, if he called them Gods, unto whom the word of God came, how say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the World, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God?* Joh. 10. 34, 35, 36. But does it appear from hence, that our Saviour has declared, that there is no more meant by his being called the Son of God, than that he was sanctify'd, and sent by God? All that can be concluded from this Passage is only this, That supposing he was no more than one thus sent from Heaven, yet it would not then be Blasphemy to assume the Title of *Son of God*. But that is by no means a Concession, that that Title did not belong to him upon any other account. But besides, it may as well be infer'd from hence, that our Saviour was not God; for he as much there declares, that he was not God, as that his Title of *Son of God* was only to denote his Divine Mission, and he seems to allow that *Son of God*, or *God* signifie the same, as the Jews understood it. So that this Text cannot be brought to shew, that *Son of God* and *Messiah* are the same.

But there is one Text more which may be urged to prove *Son of God* and *Messiah* the same; and that is *Luk.* 1. 35. *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the Power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: Therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.* But if the true Occasion of his being called the

the *Son of God* is here set down, then it is plain that the other Instance last mention'd was not to the Purpose: Because there the reason of that Character is pretended to be by our Saviour's own Confession, only upon the account of his being *sanctify'd*, and sent *by God*. So that one of them must be given up, as proving nothing in the Case. But neither does this latter Text give us a full account of our Saviour's being *Son of God*: It only tells us one Reason why he should be called so, in his Humane Nature, as being conceiv'd by the *Holy Ghost* of a Virgin. But 'tis plain that this was not design'd to take in the full Sence of that Expression, because there are other places in Scripture, that give that Title to our Saviour, where it can only relate to his eternal Existence, as has been already shewed.

But it will farther appear from hence, that the Jews thought *Son of God* to signify more than being the *Christ*. That tho' before, and at the time of our Saviour's Coming, they gave the Title of *Son of God* to their expected *Messiah*, and the * *Chaldee Paraphrast*, and all the *Learned Rabbins* had constantly interpreted that Passage in *Psal.* 2. *Thou art my Son*, &c. of the Messiah; yet after our Saviour's Coming, they not only altered that Interpretation, but also denied that they ever expected their † Messiah should be the *Son of God*, least the Christians should take Advantages of it, as one of their Doctors acknowledges. Which is sufficient to shew that the *Jews*, who after our Saviour's Coming,

* *Vid. Dr.* Pocock *Not. ad* Maimonid. *p.* 316. † Ἰουδαῖος δὲ οὐκ ἐν ὁμολογῆσαι ὅτι προφήτης τὶς εἶπεν ἥξειν Θεοῦ υἱόν. ὃ γὰρ λέγουσίν ἐστιν ὅτι ἥξει ὁ χριστὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ· καὶ πολλάκις δὲ ζητοῦσι πρὸς ἡμᾶς εὐθέως περὶ υἱοῦ Θεοῦ, ὡς οὐδενὸς ὄντος τοιούτου οὐδὲ προφητευθέντος. Orig. *Advers.* Cels. *lib.* 1.

denied

denied this Title of *Son of God* to their expected Messiah, did believe that it signify'd more than only being the Messiah; for they disown'd it, because they thought it would prove what the Christians made use of it for, the Divinity of the Messiah. But this I may have more occasion to consider by and by. From all that has been urged it seems evident, that as *Messiah* and *Son of God* do not signify the same, so there is something more necessarily requir'd to be believed besides this Proposition, that *Jesus is Christ*, or the *Messiah*.

But if we should suppose the believing *Jesus to be the Messiah* sufficient to make a Man a Christian, will it be the believing that bare Proposition that qualifies him for such a Character? If it will not of it self, what sence must it be taken in? Must every one be left to his own private Explication, or must it be received according to the general Sence of Scripture? Now if we are to believe it as deliver'd in sacred Writ, I would know in what Place it is there declar'd, that the believing it in such a particular sence, just so, and no otherwise, is requir'd as absolutely necessary to Salvation. For if the explicite Belief of that Article only is sufficient, why are we not informed from what particular Text of Scripture we must draw the sence of it, to be believed in such a manner only, upon the Forfeiture of Salvation. For it is not much to the Purpose, to say that this Proposition is alone requir'd to make a Man a Christian, unless there can be produced the same Authority for the absolute necessity of believing it in such a sence.

But perhaps it will be said in Answer to this, that our Author has explain'd this Proposition from the Declarations of Scripture concerning it; and that this is the full sence of it, which he has deliver'd *p.* 31. and re-

repeated in his *Vindication*, p. 28. *Believing Jesus to be the Saviour promised, and taking him now raised from the Dead, and constituted the Lord and Judge of Men, to be their King and Ruler.* But it may be demanded, whether this is the full Sence and Interpretation of it in Scripture; and whether this is all that is required to be believed concerning the Messiah; or where it is laid down in Scripture, that this Sence and Meaning of Jesus being the Messiah, exclusive of all others, is to be believed as necessary to Salvation. For this cannot be lookt upon as the only Explication, unless it can be shewn, that it is declared to be so in Scripture, and that this alone, neither more, nor less is to be believed as necessary to Salvation, which seems to be a Matter of no small difficulty. So that the believing Jesus to be the Messiah, tho' we should take in *his* Interpretation of it, if it was design'd for such, does not seem of it self to be sufficient to *make a Man a Christian.*

But for the clearer Examination of this Assertion, we may consider, *first*, That what might be sufficient to denominate a Man a Believer, or a Christian, during the actual Ministry of Christ, would not truly Entitle any one to that Character now, or during the Ministry of the Apostles, after our Saviour's Ascension, and that for this Reason; because we do not find from the whole History of the *Gospels*, that any of those who believed on our Saviour, had a just Knowledge of him, or what was the true End of his coming into the World: Which I have already observ'd of his Disciples, from that Question of their's to our Saviour, *Lord wilt thou at this time restore the Kingdom to* Israel? To which he does not give a direct Answer, but shews them their Ignorance, by telling

them, *It is not for you to know the times and ſeaſons which the Father hath put in his own Power, but ye ſhall receive*
Acts 1. *Power after that the Holy Ghoſt is come upon you, and ye ſhall be witneſſes unto me, both in* Jeruſalem, *and in all* Judea, *and in* Samaria, *and unto the uttermoſt parts of the Earth.* From whence it is natural to infer, that the Apoſtles had not yet attained to that clear Knowledge of Him, and the Deſign of his Coming, which it was neceſſary they ſhould be endued with. And if the Apoſtles had not arrived to that fullneſs of Faith, who had been with him from the beginning, it is abſurd to imagine, That any others who had believed on Him, could have entertain'd any clearer, or more diſtinct Notions of Him. So that we cannot form any adequate Rule of Faith from what is deliver'd in the *Goſpels* concerning the believing *Jeſus to be the Meſſiah*, ſince the juſt Meaning of that Propoſition was not then underſtood.

Nor will it alter the Caſe by ſaying, That thoſe who died then in that Faith, were undoubtedly ſaved; for that would be no more an Argument than the proving, that becauſe a Jew was ſaved before Chriſt's Coming into the World, by Vertue of Chriſt's Mediation, in the Obſervance of the Moſaick Law, he might be equally capable of Salvation now, in the Profeſſion of that Religion. For we are to direct our Faith and Practice according to the moſt full and clear Revelation of God's Will, and to believe that to be neceſſary to Salvation, which appears from the full Extent of Revelation, to be requir'd in order to it. For that Rule of our Bleſſed Saviour will always hold: *That where much is given*, or much Revealed, *there is alſo much required* to be believed.

If

If therefore the Disciples did not then fully know, what is necessary for a Christian now to believe, as 'tis very evident they did not, it will necessarily follow, that the bare believing Jesus to be the Messiah, is not sufficient, or all that is necessary to Salvation, or even to make a Man a Believer, or a Christian. For the Disciples did already believe that Jesus was the Messiah, as is granted in the *Reasonableness of Christianity*, but did not understand how far his Mediation extended, or what he must do in order to become our Mediator. And this I shall prove from our Author's own Concession, to be an Argument of no small Force. For if all that was necessary to Salvation, or to denominate Men truly Christians, was the bare believing Jesus to be the Messiah, why should our Saviour promise the Mission of the Holy Ghost, to instruct them farther in what they ought to believe concerning him, as in *Joh.* 16. 12. *I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now, howbeit when he the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth. For he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.* And at the 25 *Ver. These things have I spoken unto you in Proverbs, the time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in Proverbs*, or Parables, *but shall shew you plainly of the Father.* Now to what End was all this? Was it not to teach them more clearly something that concern'd their Faith and Knowledge? But this, according to our Author, could not be, for they had already believed he was the *Messiah*; and if that was all that was necessary, why should they need any other Instruction? Since our Blessed Saviour had already given God Thanks in one of his last Prayers, *that they had already believed that God did send him.* Joh. 17. *I have given unto them the Words which thou gavest me, and* 18.

*they have received them, and they have believed that thou*
p. 183. *didſt ſend me*, i. e. By our Author's own Interpretation, *in effect that he was the Meſſiah promiſed and ſent by God.*
Ibid. And in the 25 *ver.* ſpeaking of his Diſciples, he ſays, *They already know that thou didſt ſend me*, i. e. *Are aſſured that I am the Meſſiah.* Now if they firmly believed all this already, according to our Author, and this was all required of them to be believed, to what End was the Holy Spirit to be given them, to inſtruct them more fully in the Belief of Him, or to inform them more particularly of his Dignity and Office?

For the Coming of the Holy Ghoſt could not be only to endue them with the Power of working Miracles, which were only to be made uſe of for the Converting of others. Nor will that come up to the ſence of our Saviour's Words, *that he ſhould guide them into all Truth*; ſo that if they muſt be allowed to have any Meaning in them, they muſt relate to thoſe larger degrees of Underſtanding and Knowledge, concerning the Myſtery of *Chriſt*, which ſhould be infuſed into the Apoſtles, by the *Holy Ghoſt*.

But it may be urged, that the Apoſtles after they had received the *Holy Ghoſt*, made no other Conditions of Faith in Chriſt, than that he was the *Meſſiah*, as our Author inſtances in St. *Peter*'s Sermon to *Cornelius*,
Act. 10. 43. *that whoſoever believeth on him ſhould receive remiſſion of Sins.* But will our Author aſſert that this implies no more than the bare believing him to be the *Meſſiah*, without knowing what is meant by the Word? Does it not alſo in the ſame place intimate, that he by Vertue of his Dignity and Office, had Power to *forgive Sins, which none can do but God alone?* And thus in the 36 *ver.* that this Meſſiah was *Lord of all*, i. e. Was over all God bleſſed

bleſſed for ever. All which, as they are implied in the Sermon of St. *Peter*, ſo they there ſeem neceſſarily required to be believed in order to Baptiſm, and conſequently to Salvation. And we cannot beſides imagine, that the Apoſtle would ſo far impoſe upon Men, as to oblige them to believe what they knew nothing of, or to build their Faith upon Words without Meaning: Which we muſt ſuppoſe them to do, if they made the bare believing *Jeſus* to be the *Meſſiah*, to be all that was neceſſary, without explaining what they meant by *Meſſiah*, how he was our *Meſſiah*, or what he muſt be, either God, Man, or both, that he might be capacitated to be the Meſſiah.

And therefore we are to underſtand by believing *Jeſus* to be the *Meſſiah*, in this and almoſt all other places, the full Extent and Meaning of thoſe Words, as they are explain'd by this, and other Apoſtles in all parts of Scripture: Which were all of them Inſpired by the ſame Holy Ghoſt, and therefore muſt all have the ſame Meaning, unleſs the Holy Spirit dictated different or contradictory kinds of Doctrine, which would be too impious to aſſert. And therefore the believing *Jeſus* to be the *Meſſiah*, as it is now requir'd for a Fundamental of our Faith, muſt comprehend the full Sence that is given of it in Scripture; unleſs we can prove, that there was not the ſame Inſpiration, and conſequently not the ſame Reaſon for our Faith.

Nor does the believing *Jeſus to be the Meſſiah* appear to be all that is neceſſary to make a Man a Chriſtian, from that place of the *Acts* where the *Eunuch* is mentioned to have been Baptized, upon that Confeſſion of his Faith to *Philip*, *I believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God*, Act. 8. 37. For though here is no more ſet down,

down, yet no doubt there is more implied. For we have none of the Doctrines recorded, that *Philip* Preacht to him, but that he inſtructed him in the Chriſtian Religion, from that Chapter of *Iſaiah*, which is a Propheſy of the Sacrifice of Chriſt, and that he was to Die for our Sins; which Doctrines, as they muſt be part of what *Philip* taught, ſo no doubt they were requir'd as abſolutely neceſſary to be believed; and beſides, ſince *Philip* Baptized him, no queſtion but he did it in that Form which Chriſt himſelf enjoin'd, *In the Name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt*, and then it will follow, that the Belief and Confeſſion of the Three Perſons was required. For where the Form of Baptiſm is not mention'd, we ought to underſtand it to be the ſame which was Inſtituted and Commanded by Chriſt himſelf, and which was obſerv'd by the Primitive Church.

But *Secondly*, I ſhall ſhew that the *Goſpels* and *Acts* are directly oppoſite to our Author's Scheme of Doctrine, and do require much more to be believed concerning our Saviour, than barely that he was the *Meſſiah*. As *firſt*, It is plainly laid down in thoſe Holy Writings that he was *God*; nay, his Divinity is ſo plainly aſſerted by St. *John*, in the firſt Chapter of his Goſpel, that it ſeems almoſt impoſſible for Words to expreſs it more clearly: *In the beginning was the word, and the word was God*, &c. Now it is moſt certain, as has been already obſerved, that by Λόγος, both in Jewiſh and Heathen Writers was meant a Divine Perſon, and was much uſed by the *Platoniſts* that liv'd in this Apoſtle's Time; and that the moſt Learned amongſt the Jews, did appropriate that Title to their expected Meſſiah, as well as they believed he ſhould be *God*.

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So that this may be a very good Reaſon for our Saviour, and his Apoſtles requiring no more to be believed in their Preachings amongſt the Jews, than that *Jeſus* was the *Meſſiah*, ſince if they once firmly believed that, they muſt neceſſarily believe him alſo to be *God*. And this is alſo evident from the Jews never objecting Idolatry at the firſt to the Chriſtians, upon ſuppoſition that he was the Meſſiah, whom they Worſhiped; which certainly they would have done, had they not expected their Meſſiah ſhould be God: Which is an Argument manag'd with ſuch Strength and Judgment, in a late Diſcourſe, by a Learned Prelate of our Church, that it may ſeem of it ſelf ſufficient to ſilence all Oppoſition, except that of Malice, that can be made againſt it, or againſt the Divinity of Chriſt.

Indeed *Trypho* the Jew, in his Diſpute with * *Juſtin Martyr*, aſſerts, that the Jews did not expect their Meſſiah to be God, but only ἄνθρωπον ἐξ ἀνθρώπων, as he expreſſeth it; but that he does not here ſpeak the true ſence of the Jews, who lived before him, is evident from what † *Euſebius* declares, that the Jews had the ſame Opinion with the Chriſtians, concerning Chriſt's Divinity, till they changed it in direct Oppoſition to the Chriſtians: Which gives us a very good account of the Reaſon why *Trypho*, and the reſt of the Jews fell from their Notion concerning the Divinity of their expected Meſſiah; the Chriſtians having gain'd great Advantages over them, from the Opinions of the ancient *Rabbins* about it. And therefore we may beſt judge of the Opinions of the Jews concerning the Divinity of the Meſſiah, from thoſe who lived before our

* Juſtin. Martyr. *Dialog. cum* Tryphon. Judæo, p. 266 B. *Ed.* Pariſ. † Dem. Evang. *l.* 4. *c.* 1.

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Saviour, since the latter Jews have differed very much from them. And this is plain from their different Interpretation of the second *Psalm*: For † One of them ingeniously confesses, "That all their Doctors had expounded it of the Messiah, which he allows to be a "clear Explication of it; but however that it would "be more to the Purpose for them now to understand "it, as spoken by *David* of himself. And * another of them also acknowledges, "That this *Psalm* was constantly interpreted by their Doctors, to signify the "King Messiah, but that they might be more able to "deal with the Hereticks, by which he means the "Christians, it would be more convenient to interpret it of *David* himself.

Which is a very fair Confession why they dissented from the Opinions and Interpretations of their Ancestors; because they might more strongly oppose the Christians. For if they should admit those Interpretations of their ancient Doctors, to speak the genuine sence of Scripture, they should give too great Advantages to the Christians, who by this Means (as Dr. *Pococke* * hath observed) 'Would be supply'd with Arguments, to prove Christ the Son of God, and consequently consubstantial with God the Father. And if this one *Psalm* be granted to relate to Christ alone (as indeed it is almost impossible to wrest it to any other

† *R.* David. *sunt qui interpretantur Psalmum istum de* Gog & Magog, *estque Messiah Rex Messias, atque ita exposuerunt Doctores nostri. Estque Psalmus hoc modo explicatus perspicuus, at vero proprius est dixisse ipsum* Davidem *de seipso uti à vobis expositum,* Not. Miscel. *in* Maimon. C. 8. p. 314. * *Doctores nostri exposuerunt* [*hujus Psalmi*] *significatum de Rege Messiah, at prout sonat, & ut respondeatur Minæis, seu Hereticis expedit interpretari ipsum de ipso* Davide R. Salamo Jarchi, p. 315. * Ib.

Sence

Sence) we cannot but acknowledge him to be GOD, *begotten of his Father before all Worlds.*

There are also several other places in Scripture, which are always applied by the Ancient Jewish Interpreters to our * Saviour, which sufficiently shew, that they believed he should be GOD: As *Psal.* 45. *Thy Throne O God is for ever and ever.* And *Isa.* 25. 9. *And in that day it shall be said, Lo this is our God.* With several other places of the like nature, which being constantly interpreted of our Saviour, by the *Chaldee Paraphrast*, and all the Ancient Jewish Interpreters, do evidently demonstrate, that they believed their Messiah should be GOD, notwithstanding the Opposition made against it by the latter Jews.

But last of all, that the Jews did expect their Messiah should be GOD, is I think very plain, from their objecting Blasphemy to our Saviour, when he acknowledg'd himself to be the Son of God, when the High-Priest adjur'd him to tell him, whether he was so, or not. For they could never have accus'd him of Blasphemy, for saying he was the Son of God, if they understood no more by that Expression, than being the Messiah, and if they expected their Messiah should be no more than a meer Man.

And it was for this Reason, according to † Mr. *Selden*, that they accus'd him of Blasphemy, for saying he was the Son of God, because they so understood the Λόγος, or the Word of God by that Expression, that for any one to make himself the Son of God in that Notion, was nothing less than to profess himself truly GOD,

* *Vid. Not. in* Grot. *de* Veritat. Relig. Christ. *L.* 5. *Sect.* 21.
† De Jure Naturali & Gentium, *l.* 2. *c.* 12.

which if he was not, he was guilty of the higheſt Blaſphemy. And to prove this to be the true Meaning of that Expreſſion, he cites the *Hebrew* Commentaries, and *Philo Judeus*, who have commonly uſed the Son of God, to ſignify GOD himſelf.

From all which it appears, that the moſt Learned amongſt the Jews, before, and at the Coming of our Saviour, did expect their Meſſiah to be GOD. And that if they did object Idolatry to the Chriſtians afterwards, upon ſuppoſition that Jeſus was the Meſſiah, yet that they differed very widely from the ancient Opinion of the Jews.

And this Notion of our Saviour's being GOD, ſeems to be the firſt that his Diſciples had concerning him. For they had no juſt Apprehenſions of the true Deſign of his Coming into the World, or of his Death and Paſſion, and the Remiſſion of Sins he thereby obtain'd, till they had received the Holy Ghoſt. Yet they before that time certainly believed him to be GOD, as is moſt evident from the frequent Acts of Divine Worſhip which they then paid him, and from that Exſtatical Exclamation of the Apoſtle St. *Thomas*, *My Lord, and my God.* As tho' this Knowledge of him was on purpoſe then reveal'd to them, to prevent all Diſputes that might hereafter poſſibly ariſe concerning his Divinity. Since it is not to be ſuppoſed, that if he was not what they really believed him to be, truly and eſſentially GOD, but that he himſelf would have undeceiv'd, and prevented their falling into ſuch dangerous Miſtakes, as muſt neceſſarily produce endleſs Diſtractions in the Church, and bring groſs Idolatry into Religion, which has been always forbid under the ſevereſt Penalty. And we never find, that any part of

Divine

Divine Worſhip was ever allowed to be paid either to Men, or Angels, as may be ſeen by the Example of St. *Peter*, and the Angel in the *Revelations*.

And as the Divine Titles and Adorations which were particularly directed to our Saviour, by his Apoſtles and others, which he never rebuked them for, are a Demonſtration of his Divinity; ſo alſo his own Commiſſion, which he inveſted his Diſciples with immediately before his Aſcenſion: *Go ye therefore and teach all Nations, Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt*, is a ſtrong Evidence, that he not only permitted, but required Divine Worſhip ſhould be paid to him, ſince it is all Men's Duty to Worſhip him, in whoſe Name they are Baptized, and that he thought it no *Robbery to make himſelf equal with GOD*.

But if it be urged, (as a late * Socinian Author has objected againſt the Sence of this Text) that the Apoſtles did not always obſerve this Command in their Baptizing Chriſtians, but only made uſe of the Name of *Jeſus*, without mentioning either *Father*, or *Holy Ghoſt*, (which however was always ſuppoſed, if not mentioned in the Form, tho' the Author of the *Acts* does not take notice of it, becauſe his chief Buſineſs was to trace the Progreſs of Chriſtianity in its firſt Propagation, and to ſhew that none could be Chriſtians, or capable of Salvation, but who were Baptized into the Name of Chriſt) yet this will not invalidate the Argument, but much rather confirm it, ſince none could be admitted for Members of the Church, without the Conditions of acknowledging Chriſt for their

* *Objections againſt Mr.* Edwards's *Cauſes of Atheiſm.*

Lord and Saviour, by a conſtant Obedience to his Laws, and by continual Acts of Devotion and Adoration to him: Which ſufficiently eſtabliſh the *Divinity* of our Saviour. For if paying Divine Worſhip to him may be juſtified, without acknowledging him to be GOD, there can be no good Reaſon aſſign'd why any Man ſhould be Condemn'd for the Invocation of Saints and Angels. For if Chriſt be not GOD, he is a Creature, for there is no Medium betwixt them, and therefore to Worſhip ſuch a One, is directly contrary both to Natural and Reveal'd Religion; and could hardly, I think, be juſtified by an abſolute Command of God; for it is giving his Glory to another. And beſides, Creature-Worſhip is fully oppoſite and contradictory to Natural Reaſon. For Adoration neceſſarily ſuppoſes Omnipreſence, which is an incommunicable Attribute of God himſelf. And ſince there may be Ten Thouſand Petitions offered up at once in ſo many different places, it is impoſſible he ſhould be acquainted with them, unleſs he be both Omnipreſent and Omniſcient; the one to be preſent to all Petitions, and by the other to ſearch into the ſecret Affections of Men.

Whether the preſent *Unitarian* Writers will allow Divine Honours to be paid to our Saviour, or not, is not very material; this every one muſt be convinc'd of, that the Adoration of Chriſt is as much mention'd in the Hiſtory of the *Goſpels*, and as much enjoin'd in thoſe, and other parts of Scripture, as any other Doctrine whatever. So that it would be much more convenient for them, to reject all Revelation in general, than to cut off all thoſe parts of it, that are diſagreeable to their *Hypotheſis*. For to own a Revelation, and at the ſame time to disbelieve what is therein clearly

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deliver'd, is ſuch a Contradiction as, I am afraid, their Reaſon can hardly reconcile. But ſince in ſome of their Pamphlets they have denied Omnipreſence and Omniſcience to Almighty God, and ſo have left us at a loſs for a God Infinitely Perfect, they may with the ſame Aſſurance call in queſtion either the Truth, or Authority of his Revelation.

But ſeeing the Author of the *Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity* does believe all that is contain'd in the *Goſpels* and *Acts*, I ſhall endeavour to convince him by one Text more, for the Proof of Chriſt's Divinity, and conſequently for the neceſſity of believing more concerning him, than barely that he was the Meſſiah, from the Example and Expreſſions of the firſt Martyr St. *Stephen*, who ſuffered ſome Years before any of the *Goſpels* or *Epiſtles* were written, and therefore his Authority ought to carry very great Weight along with it, ſince ſuch an Example ſeems to be of as great Force and Obligation, as a Poſitive Command. For as he was full of the Holy Ghoſt, and ſaw the Glory of God, and the Heavens opened, whilſt yet in the Body, ſo his Dying Words are upon that account more particularly remarkable: *And they ſtoned* Stephen, *calling upon God, and ſaying, Lord Jeſus receive my Spirit; And he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, Lord lay not this ſin to their charge*, Act. 7. 59, 60. In which Words theſe Two things are very conſiderable: *Firſt*, The Divine Honours here paid to our Saviour, wherein, if Chriſt be not GOD, he was guilty of Idolatry. *Secondly*, The Expreſſions contain'd in his Petition, which are almoſt the very ſame, which our Bleſſed Saviour had before made the ſubject of his laſt Petition to God the Father, at his Paſſion upon the Croſs: *Father into thy*

*hands*

*hands I commend my Spirit.* And as before in the 34 *ver. Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.* Both which are, as to the Matter, the ſame with thoſe St. *Stephen* offer'd up to our Bleſſed Saviour, and attribute the ſame Honour, and in almoſt the very ſame Words, which Chriſt in his Humane Nature gave to God the Father. From whence we may conclude, that either *both*, or that neither was *God.*

I might bring innumerable Inſtances from Scripture, to prove the neceſſity of believing Chriſt's Divinity, as where the Creation of all things is attributed to him, and other things that declare his Divine Power and Authority. But theſe few I have made uſe of, are as ſufficient as Ten Thouſand, where Men are reſolv'd to believe according to the Evidence of Things. Now the Queſtion is not, Whether Chriſt's Divinity is to be comprehended by our Reaſon, but whether it is not atteſted by Revelation. And if this be made out beyond all poſſibility of being denied, all the Arguments that can be drawn from Humane Reaſon will prove much too weak to overthrow it; unleſs we can prove, that there is more Truth and Certainty in Man's Reaſon, than in the Teſtimony of God.

And thus have I ſhewn from thoſe places of Scripture which the Author of the *Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity* does admit of, that there is ſomething more to be believed concerning our Bleſſed Saviour, than that he was the *Meſſiah.* And that thoſe places which I have mention'd, are direct Proofs of Chriſt's Divinity in the moſt plain and natural Sence of the Words, ſuch as they *were deſign'd to have in the Mouths of the Speaker,* is what the meaneſt Capacity will eaſily apprehend.

But it may be ſaid, that Chriſt's Divinity being aſſert-

aſſerted in Scripture, does not make it an Article of Faith, or neceſſary to be believed to Salvation, or to make a Man a Chriſtian, unleſs it was there ſo declared, any more than ſeveral other parts of Holy Writ; which indeed we acknowledge to be true, but yet are of no Concern to us. In anſwer to this it may be queſtion'd in the firſt place, whether the Scripture's aſſerting him to be *God*, does not make it neceſſary to believe him to be ſo, as well as we are to believe explicitely that *God* Created all things, though it is not mentioned as an Article neceſſary to be believed to Salvation in Scripture. But as we are obliged to know who was the Author of our Being, ſo alſo muſt it be equally a Crime not to know clearly, who and what he was, that could be the Author of our Salvation.

But *Secondly*, The Deſign of the Scripture's mentioning him ſo often with the Characters and Titles of *God*, make it neceſſary for us to believe him to be ſo. For to what End ſhould St. *John* ſo much contend for his being *God*, in oppoſition to *thoſe* who denied his Divinity, if yet every Man might be at his liberty to believe as he pleaſed concerning him? For there could be no reaſon for the defending his Divinity, with ſo much Care and Concern, if it was not abſolutely neceſſary to be believed to *make a Man a Chriſtian*, or if there was no danger in believing him to be only Man. In like manner, the Deſign of the Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, in aſſerting ſo largely the Divinity of Chriſt, by reaſon of the wrong Opinions that ſome Men had concerning him, makes it neceſſary for us to entertain true Notions concerning his *Divinity*. And this neceſſity of believing Chriſt to be *God*, even to make a Man a Chriſtian, will alſo appear from St.

*Paul's*

*Paul*'s reaſoning in his Epiſtle to the *Coloſſians*, where he tells them, *that all things were created by him*, and *that he is before all things*, Chap. 1. Ver. 16, 17. But chiefly in his ſecond Chapter, he admoniſhes them to *Beware leſt any man ſpoil them through Philoſophy and vain Deceit, after the Tradition of Men, after the Rudiments of the World, and not after Chriſt; for in him dwelleth all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily.* The deſign of which Words ſeems plainly to be this; To caution them, leſt they ſhould fall from their Faith concerning *Chriſt*'s being GOD, through the deceitful Arguments of ſome ſort of Men, who might perſwade them, that it was irreconcilable to Reaſon. For he did aſſure them, with all the Sincerity of a faithful Apoſtle of Chriſt, that the *Godhead* was really and ſubſtantially in him. And thereupon he enjoins them to believe it, if they would retain the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity. And if this be allowed to be the Force of the Apoſtle's Reaſoning, as indeed it ſeems to be, it muſt be ſufficient to inforce the neceſſity of believing *Chriſt* to be GOD, to make a Man a Chriſtian.

But again, as we cannot deny that we are obliged to believe Chriſt to be the *Son of God*, becauſe it is required in ſeveral places of Scripture, and St. *John* tells us, that his Goſpel was written for this End, that we ſhould believe *Jeſus to be the Chriſt, and the Son of God*; ſo we muſt alſo confeſs him to be GOD, becauſe, as I have already proved, his Divinity is underſtood by that Expreſſion, the ancient *Jews* both applying it to their expected *Meſſiah*, and alſo meaning a *Divine Perſon* by it. All which ſeem as fully to require us to believe him to be GOD, if we would be Chriſtians, as we are in other Paſſages enjoin'd to acknowledge him to be *Chriſt*.

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And *Laſtly*, it is moſt evident that the explicite Belief of Chriſt's being *God*, is requir'd to make a Man a Chriſtian, from the Form of Baptiſm, at our Admiſſion into Chriſtianity, in the *Name of Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt*. Where an equal Belief in all is required, as being equally partakers of the ſame Divine Nature; and we may as well ſay, that the *Father*'s Divinity, as the *Son*'s, is not here implied. But this I have ſpoken to already.

And here we may add, for a great Confirmation of this Truth of Chriſt's being *God*, that the *Univerſal Church*, as may be gather'd from the moſt Primitive Writings, and the firſt *General Councils*, hath always aſſerted His Divinity, as being moſt undoubtedly expreſſed in Scripture. How comes it therefore to paſs, that if the Belief of Chriſt's Divinity, was not thought clearly Revealed, and neceſſary to Salvation, all thoſe that oppoſed it from the firſt Ages of the Church, to this preſent time, have been Condemn'd and Cenſur'd for Hereticks? * *Not as though the ſence of the Catholick Church is pretended to be any infallible Rule of interpreting Scripture in all things which concern the Rule of Faith. But that it is a ſufficient Preſcription againſt any thing that can be alledged out of Scripture, that if it appear contrary to the ſence of the Catholick Church, from the beginning, it ought not to be looked upon as the true meaning of Scripture.* So that if the denying Chriſt to be GOD, is contrary to the received Interpretation of Scripture in the Catholick Church, and alſo inconſiſtent with the plain meaning of the Words, we muſt conclude, that either his Divinity muſt neceſſarily be believed, even to make

* *Vid.* Biſhop *Stillingfleet*'s Rational Ac. of the Prot. Relig.

a Man a Christian, or that the Revelation is not to be regarded.

But *Secondly*, We must also believe the Incarnation of Christ: *For every Spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God*, 1 Ep. Joh. 4. 3. and therefore we must acknowledge that he was Man as well as *God, and that he was made like unto his Brethren, that he might be a merciful and a faithful High-Priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people*, Heb. 2. 17. And that this is part of the Mystery of Godliness, which is necessary to be believed by all Christians, *that God was manifest in the flesh*, 1 Tim. 3. 16. And that though he was *in the form of God, and thought it not Robbery to be equal with God, yet made he himself of no Reputation, and took upon him the form of a Servant, and was made in the likeness of Men, and being found in fashion as a Man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto Death, even the death of the Cross*, Phil. 2. 6, 7, 8. All which plainly denote to us both his Divine and Humane Nature, which we must believe to be united in one Person. Agreeable to which are those Words of St. *Paul: Feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own Blood*, which could only be done by taking the *Manhood into God*. I need not multiply Texts to prove that our Saviour was Man; this I suppose none of the *Unitarians* will dispute. But the difficulty lies in this, that he was both God and Man: But this also is very frequently and fully asserted in Scripture.

But *Thirdly*, We must also believe *That he died for us, and in our stead, to free us from the Wrath to come; That his Death was a propitiatory Sacrifice for us*; and *That his was the blood of the New Testament*, as himself testifies of it,

*which*

*which was ſhed for many for the remiſſion of ſins*, Mat. 26.28. And that this is part of the Chriſtian Faith, according to St. *Paul, that he died for our Sins*, as the Scriptures foretold of him. And for this End he ſaith, *He was ordained a Preacher, to teſtify that Chriſt gave himſelf a ranſom for all*, 1 Tim. 2.6, 7. But this I have inſiſted upon ſo largely already, and ſhewn that this was the true Reaſon of his Death, from ſo many Inſtances in Scripture, that I need ſay no more upon it. It is ſufficient to ſhew that this is neceſſary to be believed, ſince our Salvation depends on the Knowledge of the New Covenant, and the Conditions of it, and how far we are concern'd both in Faith and Practice. In ſhort, as the Scripture hath aſſured us that Chriſt was the Mediator of the better Covenant, and that we muſt believe in him; ſo muſt our Belief of him be meaſured by what is revealed concerning him. For Chriſt himſelf hath told us, *That is Life Eternal to know the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom he hath ſent*, i. e. The Knowledge of Chriſt is as much a Condition of Salvation, as that of God the Father. And the moſt certain Knowledge of both is to be drawn from Revelation.

And therefore as we are obliged to believe concerning the Nature of God whatſoever the Scripture has revealed, ſo alſo we muſt believe of *Chriſt*, as the Scripture has made him known to us. So that the adequate Meaſure of our Faith in both muſt be taken from Scripture. For if upon a Suppoſition of no Revelation, we muſt believe all that of God, which Right Reaſon could dictate to us, then certainly ſince we have a Revelation from God, and that Revelation has alſo obliged us to believe in Chriſt, in order to Salvation, we muſt believe upon the hazard of our Salvation every thing

concerning him, which is asserted by that Revelation. And as in the general Confession of Faith, when we say, *We believe in God the Father*, &c. we are to understand all the other Attributes of God, which are made known to us either by Reason, or Revelation, as that he is Just, Good, Merciful, that he governs all things by his Providence; or whatever else can be conceived in a Being infinitely Perfect; so when we say, *We believe in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord*, we must also mean by it whatsoever else we can find in Scripture, in reference to our clearer understanding that Article; as that he is *God and Man*, *our King*, *Prophet and Priest*; and what more the Scripture has comprehended under each of those distinct Offices. For believing in Christ, if it mean any thing, must be interpreted of every thing that Scripture has requir'd to be believed concerning him. So that this we may be certain is a Fundamental, that as Christ is the Author of our Salvation, so that Revelation is the just measure of our Belief in him; and that we must not believe either more, or less of him, than we are warranted by Scripture.

But it will probably be objected to all this, that though it be granted, that there are several Articles to be believed by those who are throughly Christians, yet there was no more required by our Saviour himself, or his Apostles, *to make a Man a Christian*, or in order to his Admission into Christianity, than the believing *Jesus to be the Messiah*, and that this is all which the Author of the *Reasonableness of Christianity* contends for.

In answer to this it may be observed, *first*, that the forementiond Articles, as well as others that might be named, are of the same Nature with that one Article,

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of Believing *Jeſus to be the Meſſiah*, and are a Repetition of it in all its Branches; for without the Knowledge of them, the Nature of the *New Covenant*, and the Meaning of *Jeſus* being the *Meſſiah*, would be altogether Unintelligible. For which Reaſon they ſeem as neceſſary to be Believed, to make a Man a Chriſtian, as that one Article: Since we cannot ſuppoſe, that Perſons ſhould be admitted into the Chriſtian Faith, without underſtanding the Meaning and Extent at leaſt of that one Article.

But, *ſecondly*, there was more required even to make a *Man a Chriſtian*, than the Belief of *Jeſus being the Meſſiah*. For beſides the Obligations that all thoſe were under, who would be Chriſtians, to acknowledge him to be the *Son of God*, which we have already proved to ſignify more than his being the *Meſſiah*; there was alſo required, by our Saviour himſelf, the Believing in *Father* and *Holy Ghoſt*, or in the whole Trinity; if it be granted, which cannot be deny'd, that all Chriſtians were obliged to Believe in thoſe in whoſe Names they were Baptized. For this was the Commandment which our Saviour gave his Diſciples, *That they ſhould teach all Nations, Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt*, i. e. They ſhould firſt inſtruct them in whom they were to Believe, and then Baptize them into that Faith. And it was upon the Believing the ever *Bleſſed Trinity*, that Men were admitted Members of the Chriſtian Church, and upon the Denial of any part of that Faith, Church Communion was refuſed and has been ſo down from the Apoſtles time. If therefore Men could not be truly Chriſtians, without being Baptized into that Faith, and were not looked upon as Chriſtians if they Deny'd it, then certainly

tainly it muſt be confeſt, that there was more required even to make a Man a Chriſtian, in whatſoever Sence it be underſtood, either for the firſt Embracing that Profeſſion, or for the Continuance in it, than that *Jeſus was the Meſſiah*, or even the *Son of God*; the Faith in the other Two Perſons of the *Bleſſed Trinity* being alſo indiſpenſably required in the very Initiation into the Chriſtian Profeſſion.

But here the Objection will recur, that the foremention'd Form was never made uſe of in the Baptizing of Chriſtians; and therefore that the Faith in Chriſt was only required, his Name alone being mention'd in the Form, as may be proved from ſeveral Inſtances in the *Acts*. To this it may be anſwered, that it is certain, that the Form preſcribed by our *Saviour* was uſed in *Baptiſm*, though the Name of *Chriſt* be only taken notice of by the Author of the *Acts*. And this is plain from St. *Paul*'s Queſtion to thoſe who ſaid unto him,
Act. 19. 2, 3. *We have not ſo much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghoſt, Unto what then were ye Baptized?* Which evidently ſhews, that they could not be Baptized into the Chriſtian Faith, without Believing in the *Holy Ghoſt*. But yet after this when they were Baptized, there is no more ſet down, than that it was in the *Name of the*
ver. 5. *Lord Jeſus*; though it is very evident from St. *Paul*'s Queſtion to them, that they could not be truly Baptized, or made Members of the Chriſtian Church, but by Acknowledging and Believing in the Holy Ghoſt. So that we ought always to ſuppoſe, that when Men are only ſaid in Scripture to be Baptized in the *Name of the Lord Jeſus*, that it was in the Form enjoin'd by Him, *In the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt*. And this we muſt either grant, or ſuppoſe, that the Apoſtles did not

not faithfully diſcharge the Truſt committed to them. And this is ſufficient to ſhew, that there was more required, and ſtill ought to be, to make a Man a Chriſtian, than our Author's One Article.

And thus have I vindicated the neceſſity of believing more of our Ever-bleſſed Saviour, than that he is the *Meſſiah*: I ſhall now in the laſt place examine the Reaſonableneſs of this Author's Article of Faith, ſet down in the largeſt Terms in *p.* 301. in the Treatiſe it ſelf, and repeated in his *Vindication*, p. 28. which he ſumms up in theſe Words, *Believing Jeſus to be the Saviour promiſed, and taking him now raiſed from the Dead, and conſtituted the Lord and Judge of Men, to be our King and Ruler. And that by the All-merciful God's requiring no more as abſolutely neceſſary to be believed, he ſeems to have conſulted the Poor of this World, and the Bulk of Mankind; theſe are Articles that the labouring and illiterate Man may comprehend.*

So that this he thinks to be the great Advantage of his One Article, above all other Schemes of Religion, *That it is ſuited to vulgar Capacities, and the Comprehenſion of illiterate Men.* But for the clearer Examination of this, we may conſider, *firſt*, that ſuppoſing God either had, or ſhould reveal any thing to Mankind, and make the Belief of it a Condition of Salvation, which the Reaſon of Man could not comprehend, and we had all the Evidence the thing was capable of, that the Revelation proceeded from God, would this *Incomprehenſibleneſs* of it be a ſufficient Plea for our rejecting it? If it would, it muſt be becauſe it would be unjuſt in God to require any thing ſo reveal'd, as abſolutely neceſſary to be believed by us. But this can be no Injuſtice, ſince it is as eaſy for us to believe any thing upon the Teſtimony

mony of God, as upon the Evidence of our own Senſes; if we are fully perſwaded that God has all thoſe Perfections, which are attributed to him, and that he can neither deceive, nor be deceived. Indeed if there are direct Contradictions in that Revelation, we ought to disbelieve them, *i. e.* We ought to reject the Revelation; but if we allow the Revelation, and are aſſured that it proceeds from God, it is in vain to ſay there are Contradictions in it, for that is as impoſſible, as that God ſhould not be true.

But *Secondly*, Why all this Concern for the illiterate and Men of weak Capacities, as though it would be ſo very Prejudicial to them, to be obliged to believe what they cannot comprehend? For they do not ſeem to receive any Diſadvantage by it more than others. For if they are able to ſearch the Scriptures, they may know what they are obliged to believe, and may as eaſily believe as Men of greater Reaches, and ſtronger Reaſons. For the Myſteries of Religion which are incomprehenſible, are equally ſo to all. Indeed had God made a difference in the neceſſary Parts of Faith, between the Learned and Illiterate, and requir'd ſuch particular Articles to be believed to Salvation by all ſorts of Men, which only the Wiſeſt could underſtand, then the Poor of the World would have juſt Reaſon to complain. But ſince he has placed all Men on the ſame Level, and has requir'd no harder Terms of the one than the other, we have all the Reaſon in the World to admire his infinite Wiſdom, in that he has reveal'd himſelf as much to the Unlearn'd Bulk of Mankind, as to the Wiſe and Prudent. For he that reads may underſtand, may know what God has made neceſſary to Salvation, tho' he can underſtand what he believes but in part.

Were

Were we to draw our Belief from a long Train of Deductions, and infer every Article of Faith from ſome one Principle, though there might be a Mathematical Certainty for the Truth of ſuch a Religion, yet the Men of great ſtrength of Judgment, and Intenſeneſs of Thought, could only reach the perfect Knowledge of it, and the poor, labouring and illiterate Man muſt then moſt unhappily periſh through his Ignorance. But as now it is, all parts of our Belief are equally intelligible by all; and what we cannot comprehend as to the Manner of it, we can believe to be true upon the Veracity of him that reveal'd it. So that how myſterious ſoever ſome things may be which are propoſed to our Faith, they are not more difficult to the weak, than thoſe of ſtronger Capacities.

But there is yet in the *Third Place* more to be ſaid in Defence of our common Faith, if we conſider the Extent and Limits of it. For though we are obliged to believe what in its own Nature is a *Myſtery*, yet our Faith does not require us to go into the *myſterious Parts of it*, that is, We have no Obligations upon us to believe it as a *Myſtery*. As for Inſtance: We are obliged to believe that the *Three Divine Perſons* in the *Trinity* are one GOD, but how they are *One*, or how *Three*, what is the adequate Meaning of their Perſonal Diſtinction, or how conſiſtent with their Unity, Revelation has not made neceſſary to be believed. And ſo as to the *Creation of the World*, and the *Hypoſtatick Union of God-Man*, we are to believe as Scripture has reveal'd, but as to the manner of them, by what diſtinct Act of Omnipotence God made the one, or how he united the other, our Faith is not to determine. And in this Sence it may be granted, that we are not obliged to be-

lieve farther than our Reaſon can carry us; that muſt determine us how far, and what we are to Believe; that is, It muſt decide what is required by Revelation to be Believed, and what is to be the Extent of that Belief. For we are only enjoin'd to believe Articles of Faith as they are delivered in Scripture, without any particular Explanations of the Modes how they may be conceived. For though the Articles themſelves are neceſſary to be Believed to Salvation, yet any particular Explication of them is not; becauſe as we can have no juſt Idea of them our ſelves, ſo we have no certainty that any Body elſe can have. And therefore it is a meer Scandal caſt upon us, that we Believe we know not what; for we have a perfect Underſtanding of what is required to be Believed, and the Grounds of our Belief are as cogent as any Evidence of Senſe. For it is as eaſy to Believe what God has certainly Reveal'd, as what we can apprehend by our Senſes. We may without any great difficulty underſtand what we are to Believe; but as to the Manner, or particular *Modes* of Exiſtence of thoſe things, which are required to be Believed, as they are above our Comprehenſions, ſo are they not made any Parts of our Faith.

But, laſtly, Since our Author is of Opinion, that it would be ſo very Advantageous to Mankind in general, to have only ſuch a Religion as is very eaſy to be underſtood by all ſorts of Men, we ought to conſider how very Intelligble his Rule of Faith is, if compared with that of our Church, and how Agreeable his One Article is to the Comprehenſion of vulgar Capacities. For he that advances a new Scheme of Faith ſhould take great care, that it may not labour under any of thoſe Imperfections, for which the other is Condemned.

Now

Now let us ſuppoſe with our Author, that the believing *Jeſus to be the Meſſiah, the Saviour that was to come into the World*, to be alone neceſſary to Salvation; and let this be propoſed to an inquiſitive labouring Man, that would deſire to know a Reaſon for his Faith. Now indeed he might acknowledge that this Propoſition, *Jeſus is the Meſſiah*, is eaſy to be remembred, but not ſo eaſily underſtood. It is then very probable he would enquire what is meant by his being the *Meſſiah*. If we ſhould tell him, that he was the Saviour promiſed; the Queſtion would again recurr, What is meant by his being our Saviour, or how, or from what did he ſave us? If we ſhould ſay, that he was our Saviour by thoſe excellent Precepts which he taught, to reform Mankind; this would not ſatisfy, becauſe we had moſt of thoſe Precepts before, tho' not ſo fully explain'd; and becauſe this is not conſiſtent with the general Sence of Scripture, which tells us that he was our Saviour by *ſuffering for us*, and *in our ſtead*. If we ſhould reply, that he was indeed put to Death becauſe of our Sins, and that we ſhould by the Death of ſo innocent a Perſon, learn to reform our Lives, and follow his Doctrine. This would be yet more unintelligible; for why ſhould God ſuffer an innocent Perſon to be put to Death, becauſe the reſt of Mankind were Sinners: This indeed would be the only Means to encourage Men in their Impieties, ſince there was no ſafety in a Religious Life. And this Reaſon would alſo prevent the ſucceſs of his Doctrine; for if all his Deſign was to prevail with Mankind to receive his Doctrine, it would have been much more for his Advantage, to have ſaved himſelf by a miraculous coming down from the Croſs; for then there is no queſtion but all Men would have believed

what he taught was from God. Since this would have been a greater Evidence for the Truth of his Doctrine, than his Death could possibly be.

But if we should say that he Died to gain us an *Immortality which we lost by Adam*; yet this would not put a stop to his Enquiry; for if this was all he Died for, what should be the Meaning of those places in Scripture where he is said to be made *Sin for us, to free us from the Wrath to come?* For the frequent Repetition of his suffering for our Sins, necessarily supposes that there was some severe Punishment due to them, which we should otherwise have suffered. But if upon his farther Enquiry, why this one Article should only be required necessarily to be believed, we should inform him, that this is all that is required in the *Gospels* and *Acts of the Apostles*, and that we are not obliged to an explicite Belief of any Doctrines delivered in other parts of the New Testament; yet this would never satisfy, because as he would easily perceive the Falsity of the former, so it would be difficult to convince him of the other, if he was perswaded, that the *Epistles* had as great an Authority stampt upon them, by being Divinely Inspired, as any other parts of Scripture, and that the Apostles had the same Commission from God, in the writing their *Epistles*, as in any other parts of their Ministry.

And, *Lastly*, If this Illiterate Man should demand, Whether this *Messiah* is *Man*, or *God*; and whether we are not obliged to believe him to be *God*, because Scripture has in divers places asserted his *Divinity*; and because in the Form of Baptism by which we are made Christians, He is represented as equal to God the Father; if he should be answered, That if those places meant any thing, it must be some other Sence than we gene-

generally understand by them, or at least that they do not require an actual Belief of that Doctrine to Salvation; or that it is not material what we believe our Saviour to be, so long as we acknowledge him to be the *Messiah*; yet this would run him still into greater Perplexities, and make him throw aside all in general, rather than take up with such a Partial Religion. For whatsoever is irreconcilable with all the parts of Revelation, will never perswade any Considering Man to Embrace it, that believes there is an Equal Authority from God for the whole. Such a Scheme of Faith which our Author has drawn up, I am afraid, will give no better Satisfaction to those who are for searching the Scriptures, to see *whether these things are so.*

The Holy *Bible*, especially the *New Testament* is not so very large, but that the Knowledge of it, particularly where our Salvation is concern'd, may be easily attain'd by the meanest Capacities. Nor are there such Intricacies in the Matters of *Faith*, but that a willing Mind may see sufficient Reason for assenting to them; not because he can comprehend the Depths of them, but because he perceives it is his Duty to Believe them; since God, that cannot Lie, has assuredly Reveal'd them, and made them necessary to be Believed in order to Salvation. And why may not *Almighty God*, that has contrived such a Salvation for us, as our greatest Wisdom could never have discovered, oblige us to the Belief of some things, which our deepest Reasons cannot now comprehend?

Indeed we might with very great Reason complain, if God had laid a necessity upon us of clearly Understanding whatsoever he has required of us to Believe, I mean as to the Manner of it, because he has not been

pleased

pleaſed to explain the Manner: But ſince all that he has enjoin'd us, is only a firm Belief of whatſoever he has Reveal'd, we ought in all Humility to ſubmit our ſelves to his Wiſdom, and wait for a fuller Intuition into thoſe Myſteries in the other World, which we muſt be Ignorant of in this. And there is no Queſtion to be made, but that a great many Things are hid from our preſent Views, and which yet are required of us to be Believed, on purpoſe to heighten our Deſires after thoſe higher Degrees of Knowledge, which are particularly reſerv'd for the next Life.

It ſeems indeed very plain, that we are under an Obligation to make nothing more neceſſary to be Believed, than what is clearly laid down in Scripture, or neceſſarily to be drawn from it. But this alſo is as certain, that we ought not to deny any thing to be an Article of Faith, which the Scripture has made ſuch, eſpecially if it be clearly delivered. For it is God's Word alone that muſt guide us in thoſe Caſes, and it is as dangerous to detract from it, as to add to it.

And thus I have Examined thoſe Parts of the *Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity*, which ſeem'd to me to be Erroneous; as for thoſe that treat of the Neceſſity of Revelation, the Conditions of Repentance, Good Works, *&c.* they ſeem to carry an Air of Piety along with them, and to be writ with ſuch ſtrength of Judgment, as may be ſuppos'd that the Author had thought more upon them, than upon any other Parts of that Treatiſe.

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*FINIS.*

# POSTSCRIPT.

WHen theſe Papers were juſt coming Abroad, there appear'd a Second Vindication of the *Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity*, &c. by the Author of it. I was under Apprehenſion, that ſome Arguments might be there propounded, which ought to be conſider'd: But ſince I find they are chiefly directed againſt Mr. *Edwards Reflections*, which tho' I have not Read, I preſume are different from theſe Obſervations, by the Paſſages cited from them, I did not think my ſelf concern'd to examine them; eſpecially ſince they required more Time than the Preſs would allow.

If I have urged any Arguments that have been manag'd already by Others, it is more than I knew. What I have mention'd of Mr. *Hobbs* was with no Deſign to poſſeſs the Reader with Prejudices againſt the Author of the *Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity*; but only to ſhew, that the ſame Doctrine had been maintain'd before our Author appear'd for it: Tho' I don't believe he Borrow'd it from thence, ſince he hath declared the contrary. If in that, or any thing elſe, I have fall'n upon the ſame Notion with the Ingenious Author of the *Occaſional Paper*, Numb. I. it is more than I did, or could deſign; ſince theſe Remarks were Drawn up long before that came Abroad.

## *ERRATA.*

*Pag.* 4. *lin.* 7. *read* in the Goſpels. *p.* 14. *l.* 28. *r.* reject them. *ibid. l.* 33. *r.* Inſpiration. *p.* 20. *l.* 5. *del.* it. *p.* 35. *l.* 10. *del.* the. *p.* 44. *in Not. r.* commata. *p.* 62. *l.* 1. *r.* Crimina. *p.* 63. *l.* 12. *for* thoſe are *r.* that is. *p.* 69. *l.* 24. *r.* Apoſtle.